



Joe Palmer
Director of the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library

Sub. HB 49 Testimony
House Finance Committee
On behalf of Ohio Public Libraries

April 27, 2017

Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Ryan, and Ranking Member Cera, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding Substitute HB 49 and Ohio's public libraries. My name is Joe Palmer and I am the Director of the Mansfield/Richland County Public Library. I am here to provide a small snapshot of how our library provides essential services to the community and helps Ohioans find jobs.

The Mansfield/Richland County Public library, like all Ohio Public Libraries, tailors its services based upon what the community needs. The Library provides basic local information through First Call 211, a call center that also provides walk in services five days per week. In 2016 our call center referred 496 callers to temporary employment agencies, Ohio Means Jobs, Rehabilitation Services of North Central Ohio, and the Industrial Readiness Program at North Central State College. Our staff regularly attends the Job and Family Services Workforce Development Partnership meetings to stay updated about services in Richland County to help people in training for jobs and job searches.

Other departments and branches of the Library directly work with library customers to apply for jobs. The Library promotes the "Book a Librarian" program to help people with skills they need for jobs, developing a resume, and completing an actual application online. This service is available at all of our nine locations. In 2016 the Library offered 55 classes related to employment and computer skills. In addition to classes, there

were 412 one-on-one sessions to help people with needs or specific applications for positions. In 2017 the Library has already offered 11 classes and 148 one-on-one sessions.

In addition to the technical skills I have described, the Library offers classes on how individuals should conduct themselves in interviews and how to answer interview questions in a positive manner. In the past few years, we have worked with existing employers to educate staff on the expectations of employers. In other areas, the Library staff has specifically provided classes to the Mansfield Fire Department on Microsoft Office software. In addition, Library staff has trained members of the National Air Guard at their base on computer and office skills. We are trying to expand these services and go out to train existing employees of small companies on these basic skills. Temp2Hire, a local company that helps supply temporary employment to companies, has started a partnership with the Library. They send perspective employees to the Library for computer office skills training. These individuals do not have the basic skills to be employed. After training they are put in a queue for perspective employment.

Finally, Library staff attends the local business fair to help spread the word that the Library is available to help train company employees. We want to offer these classes outside of our walls to available sites for employers throughout the county. The Library accepts walk in requests for time with a librarian. This year we have already had 99 walk-in customers requesting individual services.

In conclusion, I thank you for the time to tell you about our services. People depend on the Library. It is time to maintain public library funding because of the diverse services we deliver. People come to us because we are neutral, we do not judge and there is no stigma.

Thank you.