



Greater Cleveland
Partnership

Advocacy

Senate Bill 166
Proponent Testimony
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Greater Cleveland Partnership
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Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair Powell, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the House Economic & Workforce Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to express our organization's support for Senate Bill 166.

My name is Marty McGann and I have the pleasure of serving as Executive Vice President of Advocacy & Strategy for the Greater Cleveland Partnership – the region's leading economic development organization and with over 12,000 members, the largest metropolitan chamber of commerce in the nation. Today we write you to offer our full support for Senate Bill 166, legislation which utilizes innovative approaches to tackle Ohio's workforce shortage, while also providing improved pathways for high school-aged students to find suitable and well-paying careers.

Over the past 18 months, we have all seen the negative impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on Ohio's business community and the state's workforce pool. These challenges have made it increasingly urgent to find creative solutions to balance our state's economic outlook. SB 166 is unique because it uses a multi-pronged approach to target workforce development barriers faced by employers, students, and career-technical schools, alike.

For employers, the legislation would provide an income tax withholding credit for businesses providing a work-based learning experience for students enrolled in a career-technical education program. Additionally, employers who provide such a program would be eligible for a premium rate discount through the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation.

For students, the program creates unique work-based learning opportunities that allow them to accumulate valuable experience in their desired trade, while also being financially compensated for their work. Additionally, the bill aims to provide increased access to driver education courses for students who face challenges in finding adequate transportation to get to and from these work-based learning experiences. However, the legislation will allow for permanent access to remote training and learning if employers choose to offer such opportunities as part of their program.

For career technical schools, SB 166 establishes the Student Pathways for Career Success Grant Program, which will provide these institutions with additional resources to improve and expand upon programming which meets the needs of the state or regional workforce.

Each component of this legislation is critical to addressing the multifaceted challenges of our current workforce shortage in Ohio. We wish to thank Senator Reineke for his efforts to find unique solutions to one of the business community's most vexing challenges. We are confident that SB 166 will be of great benefit to both students and businesses, and will lead to the development of additional creative solutions to meet Ohio's most urgent economic needs.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out by email at mmcgann@greatercle.com.