



## **STEM Entrepreneurship & Innovation Program for Students to Help Develop Ohio's Future Workforce**

**Popularly Known as the "Believe in Ohio Student STEM Innovation & Scholarship Program"**

Mr. Chairman, Madame Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee. I am here today to provide testimony in support of Amendment HC0880X1, "*STEM Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program for Students to Help Develop Ohio's Future Workforce*" to House Bill 110, which continues funding of what is more popularly known as the "*Believe in Ohio Student STEM Innovation and Scholarship Program*".

My name is John Klipfell. I am Executive Director of Entrepreneurial Engagement Ohio, which is an entrepreneurial education non-profit based in Cleveland.

I am here with Michael Woytek, Executive Director of the Ohio Academy of Science. Mike and I are the Co-Directors of the Believe in Ohio program. The Ohio Academy of Science is the most qualified statewide organization with the demonstrated reach and ability to accomplish these objectives and provide continuing support for Ohio's high schools, teachers and students

The Believe in Ohio program has been a collaboration of the Ohio Academy of Science, and Entrepreneurial Engagement Ohio since 2012. The purpose of the program is to help create a "Culture of Innovation" in Ohio high schools and middle schools, and to encourage students to continue their educations and careers in Ohio by providing scholarships to Ohio colleges, universities, post-secondary career centers and vocational schools

In 2013, the State of Ohio provided \$5 million in funding for to develop what is today known as the Believe in Ohio program. The program was successfully launched in 2014 and thrived across Ohio through 2016. Although the program lost its state funding in 2017 as a result of state budget constraints, the program was continued in Northeast Ohio on a limited basis until state funding was restored in 2019. This Budget Amendment continues funding for the Believe in Ohio program, which is especially important now as our state emerges from the pandemic and seeks to create jobs and rebuild our economy.

Since the inception of the program in 2014, 180 schools and 400 teachers from 52 Ohio counties have participated in Believe in Ohio's high school, regional and statewide STEM Commercialization Plan and STEM Business Plan competitions, with more than 16,000 students having developed 10,000+ STEM Commercialization & STEM Business Plans, with \$1.6 million in local school, regional & state competition awards/scholarships received by Ohio students.

Also, since 2014, 55 Believe in Ohio STEM Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forums have been held on 19 Ohio college campuses, attended by more 10,000 students & teachers from 250 high schools from 60+ Ohio counties.

As outlined in the amendment, funding Believe in Ohio includes:

- A comprehensive, Google Classroom based professional development program for teachers in grades 7-12 to help them develop a "Culture of Innovation" in their schools. So far, 115 teachers from 42 Ohio counties are already completing the professional development in preparation for doing Believe in Ohio next school year.
- Collaborative mentoring programs with Ohio colleges and universities, with a special emphasis on mentoring support to underserved urban and rural schools;

- Believe in Ohio's STEM Commercialization Plan and STEM Business Plan award competitions for students in grades 7 to 12, and related Regional and State Competitions that award scholarships to Ohio colleges, universities, post-secondary career centers, and vocational schools.
- To recognize students throughout Ohio for their contributions to STEM Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Believe in Ohio's Statewide STEM Scholarship will award up to \$2,500 in scholarships in each of Ohio's 99 House Districts and 33 Senate Districts to attend any Ohio college, university, post-secondary career center, or vocational school.

I strongly urge you to support this Amendment to H.B. 110.

April 11, 2021