



Senators Sandra Williams and Michael Rulli

Sponsor Testimony for Senate Bill 144
Senate Finance Committee
September 14, 2021

Chairman Dolan, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the committee, thank you for allowing Senator Williams and I to provide sponsor testimony on behalf of Senate Bill 144. Senate Bill 144 is a reintroduction of Senate Bill 304 from the previous General Assembly. Senate Bill 144 was drafted to protect Ohio call center workers. This bill would not only bar state aid from companies that have outsourced customer service call center jobs to a foreign country, but it would also ensure that these jobs stays in Ohio.

Senate Bill 144 would require companies that intend to relocate a call center from Ohio to a foreign country to notify the Director of Job and Family Services (JFS) at least 120 days prior to the relocation. If the company fails to comply, the Director of JFS will notify the Attorney General, who would then be authorized to bring a civil suit against the company in its country of origin. Every six months, the Director of JFS would compile a list of every company in Ohio that has moved a call center overseas and submit it to the Director of Development. The list would then be distributed to every state agency and companies on the list would be ineligible to receive state aid for five years, with some exceptions. Companies that have offshored jobs and are receiving state aid would be required to give that aid amount back to the Department of Development.

This bill would also guarantee all state call center contracts to be established in Ohio. Within two years of the bill's passage, every individual who does call center work for the state will be from Ohio. As legislators, we have a responsibility to protect Ohio jobs and workers. Ohioans are rightfully concerned about call center jobs being sent overseas, and our workers deserve to know if they will lose their jobs. Taxpayers should know whether or not their tax dollars are going to companies that have moved their jobs overseas. Senate Bill 144 not only holds companies accountable for outsourcing and offshoring, it also provides a level of transparency to consumers and taxpayers about which companies are receiving state aid. Ultimately, companies should not be rewarded for eliminating job opportunities that are well within the capabilities of Ohio workers. Nothing has demonstrated Ohioans' capabilities to fulfill these technological positions more than the COVID-19 pandemic and the telework necessities it created.

To this day, thousands of our citizens are working from home via phones, tablets, or laptops, and Senator Williams and I think it better that our state benefit from that work than other countries. There are a number of individuals and organizations who will be providing proponent testimony on this bill in an effort to make this legislation the best it can be. We look forward to working with the committee on this bill, and we are appreciative of the opportunity to present this before you all today. We would be glad to answer questions from the committee, and provide any follow up information should any members require it. Thank you.