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Ohio Rail Development Commission

From: Senator Bill Reineke

Date: May 11th, 2021

RE: Sponsor Testimony: SB 166 – Student Pathways for Career Success

Chairman Brenner, Vice-Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on SB 166.

Ohio has a remediation rate of 23.8% (per ODHE) for math or English. 1 out of 4 of our kids are currently falling through the cracks. We have a real problem in that kids are graduating high-school, but they don't have the necessary skills to succeed in college or other post-secondary endeavors. This relates to what I call *student purpose*. We push our kids towards the traditional 4-year college degree when that is not

a one-size-fits-all pathway. Kids that don't know their *student purpose* lack drive.

Currently, in Ohio, there is a social stigma pushing our kids away from viable, high-paying skilled trades jobs such as plumbers, mechanics, electricians, etc. and towards the traditional four-year college degree. While college is the right choice for some, many students enter college unmotivated or unprepared. These kids are more likely to need remediation and/or drop out, thus taking on college debt for little-to-no-gain. If we can engage high-school students, and enable them to participate in work-based learning opportunities, we can help them find their *student purpose*, thus reducing remediation and college debt in Ohio. The good news is that there is a real need for these in-demand, skilled-trade jobs. Employers desperately need these positions filled, and are willing to facilitate where they can.

Senate Bill 166 will attempt to correct this imbalance through a number of pathways:

1. It will incentivize Ohio companies to operate work-based learning programs for high school career-tech students
2. The bill directs ODE to establish an incentive program to improve and expand upon career-technical education programming. The grant will offer tax incentives for participating businesses, including a credit on 15% of the income tax that an employer must remit to the state on behalf of the student-worker.
3. The bill will also seek to allow the BWC to offer discounts on premium rates for employers participating in the program, as well as prohibiting increases to liability insurance as a result of employing minors.
4. It will support driver's education courses as part of high-school CTE graduation pathways. Currently, we are facing an issue where students engaging in current work-based learning programs are unable to actually get to work.
5. It ensures permanent access to remote technical training and learning.
6. It also establishes the Student Pathways for Career Success grant program for Ohio's

Career Technical Schools.

My Involvement with this issue deals with that remediation number that I referenced earlier. According to data from the AICUO, COVID-19 is going to have a huge impact on that number. Without continuing to throw money at education, SB 166 provides a better connection for business to the education world in training our students. The needs of the workforce are so strong and we're failing at teaching skills to our students. Chairmen Brenner, members of the committee, thank you once again for the opportunity, I would be happy to take any questions at this time.