



Women in  
Entrepreneurship

*Chairman Rulli, Vice-Chair Lang, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 105.*

*Today I come before you not only as a representative of women & youth owned businesses in the Mahoning Valley but as a small business owner who happens to be, what some call a double minority, a black woman. Being a minority comes with many challenges within itself, from inequality in education to health. Being a minority business enterprise, the challenges are greater. The opportunities that are afforded to us are lower than our counterparts from capital to contracts. Not because we are not qualified or skilled but because of the barriers which begins for many of us at the educational level and financial level, which have yet to become obsolete.*

*I have the privilege of working with women entrepreneurs at the Youngstown Business Incubator and now we have expanded our work to serve youth entrepreneurs. 75% of the clients are economically challenged and opening a business is scary and brings doubt and fear. Doubt and fear of going through the necessary processes, such as certifications and fees. Hearing they still need more or what they have is not sufficient, paralyzes their dream of ownership. It becomes more of a burden than a joy to start and own a business. Yet, we want them to be innovative and embrace entrepreneurship.*

*For this purpose, I am here today. To plead on behalf of myself and the other minority business enterprises, both current and future, in my community and communities throughout our State. Help break those barriers we face, beginning with passing Senate Bill 105. Help us create thriving communities, generational wealth, eliminate poverty, and create a future for those who are coming after us by making it easier for us to obtain MBE certifications, obtain the needed capital, and lessen the bureaucracy that we must face when attempting to do business in this great State of Ohio. Senate Bill 105 is the beginning of an end to glass ceilings.*

*Again, thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on SB 105.*

*Stephanie Gilchrist  
Director, Women & Youth Entrepreneurship*