**Columbus Office**
Vern Riffe Center
77 S. High Street
13th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111
(614) 466-1366
(800) 282-0253
(614) 719-6987 (Fax)
Rep93@ohiohouse.gov
www.ohiohouse.gov

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# Ryan Smith
## State Representative

Chairman Brenner, Vice-Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor and fellow members of the House Education Committee, I wanted to thank you for allowing me to testify alongside Representative Manning today on House Bill 154. As Representative Manning explained, HB 154 establishes the Commercial Truck Driver Student Aid Program. This program has the ability to boost growth in this critical job sector across the state, in rural, urban and suburban communities alike. As Rep. Manning stated, there is currently high demand for qualified workers in this industry with more expected to come in the future.  It's very important for us to pass this legislation in a timely manner so we can support the workers and industry connected to this field.

The cost of a college education or a technical certification can be astounding in the year 2017. While the cost of a certification in the commercial trucking sector has stayed relatively low when compared to the cost of a 4-year college degree, this program will offer needed assistance to the middle and working class individuals who are looking for a higher paying job that doesn't saddle them with debt for years to come. Creating opportunities for individuals to attain high wage jobs has been a priority of mine both in my district and across the state. Funding this program will help to achieve that goal and put qualified, well-trained truckers to work. The trucking industry here in Ohio needs a boost of young talent, and my joint sponsor Rep. Manning and I believe this bill will do just that. I would like to thank you all for your time today and I'm happy to take any questions you may have at this time.