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Testimony on SB 34
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Thank you Chair Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Education Committee for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of SB 34.

I stand before you, not only as a parent of two young men educated in Ohio, but also as a representative of businesses throughout the state who employ thousands of high school and college students each year as well as many, many teachers.

The school start date is of obvious concern to the travel industry because of the impact it has on job creation and retention, as well as its ability to generate tax revenue at all levels.

The Ohio travel industry believes in the enormous power of education and collaboration to better our society. We've studied this issue and others related to workforce development in the travel industry over the last couple years. Currently, I am working on a collaboration with K-12, community colleges, 4-year institutions and local businesses on a workforce initiative in Cincinnati. We've met with higher education schools numerous times, conducted interviews with employees at all levels, and participated in updating learning standards with the Ohio Department of Education.

Each of these activities has meant better understanding the issues at hand, looking beyond what's most apparent to delve deep into creating change that's good for business and education.

So, how do we dig deeper into this issue? What are the benefits of a later school start date beyond the economic advantages? How does it impact education? Other Ohio industries? Families?

And perhaps my testimony will only create more questions, which I do not think is a bad thing, because the education of our youth deserve this careful consideration. Here are just a few of the other potential benefits of a later school start date.

- **Increases agricultural harvest and productivity** – Last year, this committee heard testimony from at least one farmer who had cut his season short because he couldn't find workers. I'm sure he isn't the only one.
- **Helps students earn money for college** – [One-third](#) of all students working part-time to fund education work in the travel industry. Top that with the agricultural employment of students, and even more Ohio students have much to gain, including less student debt upon graduation.

- **Public polls elsewhere have shown support** – A Michigan [study](#) last year showed 65 percent of voters support a late summer school start. Maryland voters [support](#) at an even higher 71%. I've yet to have a parent tell me they support school opening in early August.
- **More time for teacher professional development** – [Research](#) shows that student achievement succeeds by building capacity of teachers to improve their instructional practice. Extending the school year to late August allows teachers to pursue additional trainings and development before school even starts.
- **Additional time for dual credit classes to be taken at local community colleges or online during the summer.** According to the [U.S. Department of Education](#), students who took dual enrollment were more likely to earn a high school diploma and to enroll in college than peers who did not participate in dual enrollment. The U.S. Department of Education also said dual enrollment helps low-achieving students meet higher standards and shortens the time needed to attain a bachelor's degree.
- **More out-of-classroom learning experiences and development opportunities** – A 30-year longitudinal [study](#) showed that part-time work by young adults – both during senior year of high school, and during the summer months-translates to future career benefits that include higher hourly wages, increased annual earnings and less time spent out of work. [Maryland](#) recently determined no compelling, quantifiable evidence that showed any impact on education starting post-Labor Day. But, how the calendar is organized does impact valuable learning opportunities outside of the classroom.

This is too important of a decision to boil down into a debate about only a few issues, and the thoughts I've shared probably just touch the surface. I believe the school calendar configuration is critical to the expansion of learning opportunities for our children, as well as the economy. I hope the committee carefully considers all possible benefits.

Thank you for