

Senate Finance Committee
Ohio Senate

Senator Matt Dolan, Chairman

House Bill 2 Testimony
Amy Meyer
October 1, 2019

Good morning. Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, my name is Amy Meyer, Vice President, Corporate Development for Rhinestahl Corporation.

Rhinestahl Corporation is very active in the Advanced Manufacturing Industry Partnership (AMIP), which is a manufacturers-led industry sector partnership in southwest Ohio. I have committed to be AMIP's industry chair through 2021. Our nearly 300-member companies are all volunteers and we work closely in conjunction with Partnerships for a Competitive Workforce. I am here to express AMIP's support for House Bill 2.

Workforce development is the single largest challenge for manufacturing today. I appreciate the House for making this a piece of priority legislation and recognizing the importance of the workforce issue.

Rhinestahl and many of our member companies have dedicated time, money, and resources to further technical education – especially in precision machining and welding. We partner with Butler Tech, Great Oak, Sinclair, and Cincinnati State to fill their classes with students. These classes are not filled at the adult level in part because of the cost, and in part because the stigma attached to work in manufacturing. We need to restore the credibility and reputation of American manufacturing. We have opened our doors for tours, mentoring, summer camp support, and apprentice programs. And still, jobs go unfilled.

House Bill 2 as pending creates three unique and potentially game changing opportunities:

- A new TechCred Program to reimburse employers for training costs for incumbent and prospective employees to earn an industry-recognized credential; The timing for this is perfect allowing students to enroll in January classes and help get these adult programs filled.
- A Micro-Credential Assistance Program to allow individuals to apply for a grant to pay for training costs; and
- A grant program to support regional industry sector partnerships. All our sector partnerships in Ohio are moving the needle and House Bill 2 will help us move faster to scale our programs to train workers for employment.

All three of these provisions in House Bill 2 have the potential to play an important role in what our partnership can accomplish in the coming years. Making grant dollars available to industry sector partnerships would allow us to scale up projects and work on initiatives we simply do not have the funding for currently.

A perfect example is our teacher extern program. On June 10, we hosted 12 teachers from associate schools in the greater Cincinnati area. Teachers worked and learned in an AMIP member company to learn about careers in manufacturing. They were tasked with learning about manufacturing process, creating a lesson plan to teach this fall, and are required to meet two more times during the school year. Teachers will be paid \$1,000 for their efforts.

Our goal is to get more educators to see the “wow!” in manufacturing, so they can convey to students that what they’re learning in the classroom also applies to careers in manufacturing. For example, we had two math teachers who were thrilled to understand how math and trigonometry are actually used in manufacturing. We would like to scale this program significantly and House Bill 2 would help us do that over the next two years.

Another opportunity for sector partnerships is additional resources for educating/marketing to parents and teachers. We desperately need for our message to get to moms and counselors who are directing where/how our students are being educated. Funding will allow us to utilize programs like “Making Ohio” and “What’s Cool about Manufacturing” contest, and summer camps. This is critical to filling our future workforce needs.

While we are supportive of the bill and think there is great opportunity with the programs especially the partnership grants, I would like to highlight a few provisions that might prove challenging.

Consistency in how we use terminology like “micro-credentialing” is lacking. We need more clarity and simplicity in this space. The existing certificate programs at Butler Tech, Cincinnati State, and Great Oaks are working examples that policymakers should examine for guidance. At the very least we should make sure that suppliers and customers are using the same language. It is noisy in the marketplace, so the KISS principle is best.

Payment terms for these types of programs can often be challenging as payments/reimbursements often come slowly to educational institutions, which means student education – and thus employment – is delayed. We would ask that the Senate do anything they can to make payment and reimbursement fast and seamless.

Lastly, we are hopeful that this program is wildly successful. As the results come in and the legislatures weighs these programs in the future, we would encourage more financial support to help cover the cost of some of these certificate programs that are more expensive. To be able to offer more would be a game-changer.

House Bill 2 is instrumental for Ohio's industry and our workforce. This bill will improve not only the skill level of today's workers, but also the number of people working in manufacturing. We are grateful for your assistance and on-going commitment.

I would like to thank Representatives Cross and Lepore-Hagan for sponsoring House Bill 2. I would also like to thank the Lt. Governor Husted for his leadership on the workforce issue, and his approach and support for industry sector partnerships. Finally, I would like to thank you Mr. Chairman and the members of this committee for your work on this legislation. Mr. Chairman that concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions you or the committee may have.