

Good morning.

I'm Fred Brothers. I am CEO of Fortuity Calling.

Fortuity is a large-scale social enterprise. We're located less than a mile from here in Franklinton.

We are a social enterprise, but Social Enterprise means different things to different people.

We're a for-profit company.

For us, being a social enterprise means having dual missions that we manage and balance every day.

Our business objective is to grow a large, successful customer service outsourcing company that provides high quality service for our corporate clients, and generates a reasonable margin.

Our social mission is to achieve this business objective by creating hundreds good jobs for Central Ohio residents living at or near poverty in Columbus's urban core.

We offer full-time, market-rate jobs with benefits that offer a real advancement path – a path that over time and with hard work enables working poor Ohio residents to work their way out of poverty.

For most of our employees, Fortuity will be the best work opportunity they've had.

We believe that creating social benefit is also good for our business.

We are deliberately located in Columbus's urban core because it gives us access to prospective employees that the call centers in affluent suburbs like Dublin and New Albany can't attract and retain.

We're directly on one of COTA's biggest bus lines. 400,000 Columbus residents living in low-opportunity neighborhoods can get to our location on 1 bus, with a reasonable and sustainable commute.

COTA's #10 bus stops in front of our building every 10 minutes, every day, from 5am to midnight.

The Ohio Development Services Agency and JobsOhio have both been strong supporters of our project, as have the federal, county and city levels of government.

I'd like to thank each of you for Ohio's strong support. Fortuity would not exist without ODSA's and JobsOhio's support. Thank you.

Our management team has had long and successful business careers. I have participated in \$27 billion of capital markets transactions, been part of 2 IPOs, and worked with dozens of growth companies.

Others on our team have incredibly deep call center experience, and have successfully managed more than 12,000 call center agents in call centers that have taken 30 million calls.

I mention our background only to give you perspective as I offer the following comments on the draft legislation and why Ohio really needs to pass a Benefit Corp law.

When we were developing this company, we wanted to form as a Benefit Corp.

One of our biggest challenges in raising the investment capital necessary to buy a building, renovate it, acquire significant technology and launch the business was that no one understood what we were.

We're for profit, but we also very serious about our social mission and creating social benefit.

People from the private sector mostly didn't understand why we care about a social mission – they thought we should focus on maximizing profit.

People from the nonprofit sector didn't understand why we were for-profit, and questioned our motives. They believed if we were serious about helping people, we must form as a nonprofit.

Raising the approximately \$12 million required to move this project forward took 3 years – which was 3x longer than we expected because we're an experienced team that has participated in many transactions involving far bigger dollars.

I now often say that “doing good is a lot harder than just earning a living”.

We were surprised and disappointed to learn that Ohio doesn't have a Benefit Corp law. 31 states have Benefit Corp laws, but not Ohio. I was surprised to learn that in this respect Ohio lags West Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and many other states.

Having an Ohio Benefit Corp law would have meaningfully simplified explaining what Fortuity is – a for profit company that is economically rational and sustainable – AND creates significant numbers of good jobs.

We want to earn a fair margin AND create real social benefit for our employees, our neighbors, our community, our major metro area, and our state.

I can't emphasize enough how much harder our path was because social enterprise isn't well understood, and because companies can't form as Benefit Corps in Ohio.

I've read the draft legislation, and I applaud it. If this had been law when we formed Fortuity, we would have formed as a Benefit Corp. Without question.

I believe the passage of this law will further the understanding of social enterprise, and will provide more legitimacy for companies, investors and management teams that seek to balance profit and social benefit.

Social enterprise is a fast-growing sector of our business economy, and an important jobs creator.

But it's more than that, because social enterprises tend to focus their job creation efforts on Ohioans that need a hand up and a better opportunity.

I can't emphasize enough how much this law would have benefitted the difficult and painful journey of forming this company and selling our dual missions.

I sincerely hope the legislature will pass this important legislation soon.

Thank you all very much.