



Representative Stephanie Howse
11th House District

Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 222
House Ways and Means Committee
June 9, 2020

Good Afternoon Chair Roegner, Vice-Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee. I want to thank you for allowing me to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 222, legislation that will enable Ohio to increase training and professional development opportunities for new truck drivers, in order to address our economy's growing driver shortage.

The overall economic growth of House District 11 is of utmost priority for me. I serve the most impoverished district in the state, where the average annual household income is \$24,360. For a family of three to meet their basic needs for life (housing, food, transportation, childcare, and health care) in Cuyahoga County, the family will need to earn an annual household income of \$40,615. The average truck driver in Ohio makes approximately \$43,000/year. The cost of a Commercial Driver's License training ranges from \$3,000 - \$6,000. The economic reality is that most Ohioans who want to take advantage of the available jobs are not in the financial position to participate in the required training opportunities, without the support of the state of Ohio. My constituents, along with many of your constituents, are the men and women we need to connect to result in more, highly qualified drivers, leading to safer roadways.

HB 222 would increase training opportunities to drivers in the trucking industry by providing an incentive to businesses to invest in trainings. Eligible training may include training to obtain a commercial driver's license or on-the-job professional development trainings. This legislation would make an employer eligible for a credit against the income tax, equal to one-half of the employer's actual training expenses. The tax credit would be capped at \$25,000 per business and \$3 million per year. This tax credit will help Ohio's trucking companies working to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic by helping alleviate costs associated with training drivers. This could help those Ohioans who were recently laid off and might be looking for a new career due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing training to Ohioans looking to enter an essential position in the trucking industry is something everyone should support.

By providing Ohio companies with the resources necessary to connect prospective employees with training opportunities and offering existing employees the opportunity to develop their professional skills, we will be intentionally addressing our economy's growing workforce. I believe it is our responsibility as legislators, to research and create opportunities for our constituents and to keep the Ohio Promise so all Ohioans can live, work and retire right here in our great state.

Thank you.