



OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BEFORE THE HOUSE ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
PROPONENT TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 340 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
JUNE 11, 2024

Chairman Swearingen, Vice Chairman Santucci, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 340, which will help increase economic development through an employee mobility program. My name is Matt MacLaren, and I am the Director of Travel and Tourism Policy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

For 131 years, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce has served as the state's leading business advocate and represents over 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

The Ohio Chamber fully supports House Bill 340. House Bill 340 creates an employee mobility grant program to incentivize companies to provide transportation as an employee benefit. There are many examples of private mobility providers working in tandem with public transit agencies to address workforce challenges. In several areas across Ohio, these mobility providers contract with employers to transport workers to their operations with great efficiency and often over great distances. These options complement, rather than duplicate, public transportation since they can reach Ohioans that do not reside near existing bus routes or that need to cross county lines.

Employers that contract with these mobility providers can increase the value of jobs, improve workforce access, help reduce roadway costs, and provide increased buying power for their employees. These innovative mobility efforts should be encouraged, and we believe providing an employee mobility grant of up to \$15,000 a quarter to employers for chartered transportation, with the overall grants capped at \$2 million a year, is a prudent way to spur more employers to adopt these solutions to their workforce challenges.

Transportation is a key issue for many business owners and for many workers. House Bill 340 will help solve the worker transportation issue in Ohio. It will help plants in rural areas draw workers from larger cities. It will help workers get to job sites that are across county lines and that might be farther away than a normal commute. It will help increase economic development. Therefore, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce supports HB 340 and the employee mobility grant program that it creates.

Thank you for your time, and I will be happy to answer any questions from the committee.