



*Working together for Ohio farmers to advance
agriculture and strengthen our communities.*

**House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
HB 135 Proponent Testimony
Evan Callicoa, Director of State Policy
May 23, 2023**

Chairman Bird, Vice Chair Fowler Arthur, Ranking Member Robinson, and other members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for HB 135. The Ohio Farm Bureau has long supported FFA and 4-H as vital programs for not only agricultural education, but also workforce development. This bill will allow students in both organizations to have further opportunities to develop essential skills that will allow them to be a vital part of Ohio's number one industry.

FFA and 4-H have long provided students with a wealth of activities and experiences that help them learn life skills and develop essential leadership skills. One such of these opportunities, specifically in FFA, is something called a Supervised Agricultural Experience, or SAE. This is a part of the Three-Component Model of Agricultural Education, where the other two components are classroom/lab instruction and engagement in other FFA activities such as contests and conventions just to name a few. Specifically an SAE is experiential learning, either through service or work-based learning. These experiences come in all shapes and sizes, such as working at a local hardware store, starting a lawn care business, or like I did, starting a livestock operation. My SAE was having a 100 head beef cattle herd that I owned and operated in a partnership with my father. This business not only helped me raise money for my college education, but also taught me many essential life skills that helped prepare me to be a part of the workforce. Responsibility, time management, and accountability, just to name a few.

However, an all too common problem is that these experiences often require a lot of time both inside and outside of school. Students work very hard to balance these two things, but sometimes there are events or responsibilities that occur during the school day. While some schools do allow students to have excused absences for these types of events, many schools do not. This means that students could be missing out on great opportunities to expand their knowledge or even businesses, and in the most unfortunate cases, be penalized for missing school. We believe that students should not be penalized for attempting to develop themselves not only as people through a leadership organization like FFA/4-H, but as future members of our workforce as well.

This bill will allow students to have a limited amount of excused absences for 4-H and FFA events, so that they will not be penalized for attending these events. This would not apply to the field trips and other things that their teachers already attend with them, but would provide the students further opportunities without taking their teacher out of the classroom. We believe this legislation will benefit not only the students, but their teachers and other fellow students as well.



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This will put FFA and 4-H on the same level with other work based learning programs, and allow students to prepare themselves for their future while still receiving a good education.

I would thank Representatives Creech and Hall for introducing this legislation that will benefit great organizations like FFA and 4-H that help prepare our students to be the future leaders in Ohio's workforce. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit proponent testimony, I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.