

March 21, 2023

Chairman Jones, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture, Development, and Natural Resources – my name is Naveed Iqbal and I am the Founder and CEO of Dolr. I am here to express my strong support for a proposed amendment to incentivize employers to make direct payments to their employees' student loans.

Dolr is on a mission to lower financial barriers to education. We help people beat student debt, save more for retirement, and build wealth. We do that by connecting them with extra cash from where they work, shop, and live.

According to recent data, there are over 1.7 million student loan borrowers in the state of Ohio, with an average debt load of \$34,923 per borrower.¹ This debt not only affects individuals but also impacts the economy as a whole, as it limits people's ability to invest, start businesses, and buy homes. By incentivizing employers to make direct payments to their employees' student loans, this proposal would help to alleviate this burden and give more Ohioans the freedom to pursue their goals without being weighed down by debt.

Under the proposed amendment, employers who make direct payments to their employees' student loans would be eligible to receive a 50% nonrefundable income tax credit on the total amount of such payments during the taxable year, for a total of three years per employee. This is a win-win situation for both employees and employers, as it would provide financial relief to employees burdened with student loans while also allowing employers to attract and retain top talent in a competitive job market.

As more and more employees seek to work for companies that offer student loan repayment benefits, this proposal would give Ohio employers a powerful tool for recruiting and retaining the best and brightest workers. It would also improve employee morale and productivity by reducing the stress and financial burden associated with student loan debt.

It appears that the Supreme Court is poised to strike down President Biden's student loan forgiveness proposal. This gives the private sector an opportunity to play a key role in working to reduce the student debt felt by so many Ohioans.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to support the proposal to incentivize employers to make direct payments to their employees' student loans. This proposal would benefit both Ohio employees and employers and would have a positive impact on the Ohio economy as a whole. Thank you for considering my testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

¹ "States with the Highest Student Loan Debt," AdvisorSmith, accessed March 15, 2023, <https://advisorsmith.com/data/states-with-the-highest-student-loan-debt/>