

Proponent testimony on House Bill 108
Judy Talcott, President of Goodwill Industries of Wayne & Holmes Counties
House Ways & Means Committee
May 23, 2023

Chairman Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit proponent testimony on House Bill 108, sponsored by Representatives Nick Santucci and Adam Miller. My name is Judy Talcott, and I am the President of Goodwill Industries of Wayne and Holmes Counties located in Wooster, Ohio. In 1980, a group of Wayne County business leaders mobilized to form Goodwill Industries of Wayne County, and ten years later the agency expanded to include Holmes County. We served 2,300 people in our community last year with valuable Workforce Development Services.

Goodwill provides participants with training to obtain employment so that they can gain a sense of self-sufficiency, pride, and accomplishment while decreasing their reliance on public assistance programs. While Goodwill's programs are designed to help all job seekers, most participants report a disabling condition; a lack of literacy, high school equivalency (diploma or GED), or reliable transportation; a past criminal record; or a history of substance abuse.

Three divisions work together to provide Goodwill's programming: Workforce Development, which is at the core of the Mission; Industrial Services, which works with local businesses; and Retail/Donated Goods, whereby donated items are sold at retail stores or recycled/repurposed. We have a manufacturing facility onsite, where we partner with businesses such as Wooster Brush and Schaeffler Transmission Systems to train and employ individuals in manufacturing, assembly, packaging, and kitting jobs.

Goodwill operates five stores within the two-county service area in Wooster, Orrville, Rittman, Millersburg, and Loudonville, generating income to provide employment training and services to local individuals with barriers to employment. Each year our programming touches more than 2,000 local individuals, helping them to reach their highest levels of independence and success through training and employment related services.

As was mentioned at last week's hearing on House Bill 108, our Goodwill is a trusted partner with our local JFS Agencies. For more than two decades, the Wayne County JFS office has contracted with us using primarily TANF funds to provide job training and wraparound supports to individuals that are struggling in our community.

For example, with these funds, we employ Case Managers at each of the high schools in Wayne County to mentor at-risk youth. Our case workers also work with adults to develop Individual Employment Plans, a detailed plan assessment that includes all items necessary to help a participant obtain and retain a job. This includes addressing major barriers a participant may have to becoming successful in today's workforce, such as housing, transportation, child or elder care, mental health, and addiction just to name a few.

While we value our partnership with our local JFS agencies, there are very strict TANF eligibility requirements, which prevent us from using the funds to serve individuals that fall outside of the service guidelines or financial eligibility requirements.

House Bill 108 would allow nonprofit organizations that sell donated items to retain 25% of the state sales tax generated from our retail locations, up to \$1 million annually. The retained funds would be reinvested into job training and job placement programs for individuals with workplace disadvantages, such as developmental disabilities, mental illness, criminal history, veteran status, and homelessness. Historically, this population experiences the highest rate of unemployment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 108. This important legislation will help us to serve additional individuals and I ask for your support.