



*BEFORE THE HOUSE EDUCATION AND CAREER READINESS COMMITTEE  
PROPONENT TESTIMONY ON HB 170  
TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2017*

Chair Brenner, Vice-Chair Slaby, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the House Education and Career Readiness Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today regarding House Bill 170. My name is Brandon Ogden and I am the Director of the Ohio Small Business Council (OSBC) for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. The Ohio Chamber is the state's leading business advocate, as we represent nearly 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 of Commerce is a champion for Ohio business so that our state enjoys economic growth and prosperity. In my role, I aim to fulfil the Ohio Small Business Council's mission, which is to promote the establishment, growth and vitality of small business in Ohio. In addition to OSBC, I oversee the Education and Workforce Development Committee which in part carries the mission of responding to the needs of Ohio employers in finding qualified, well-trained employees.

As you have heard throughout the prior weeks of testimony, House Bill 170 creates computer science academic content standards for grades kindergarten through twelve. The legislation adds computer science instruction as an option in lieu of certain elective, science and math subjects, namely Algebra II. The basis for the Ohio Chamber's support is simple; we feel that in general competency in computer science better prepares students for the workforce or their next step in education. It provides practical knowledge, or as one of our members stated "a more tangible application learning process." I take this to mean that the skills and knowledge gained through successful completion of a computer science course actually translate into those used in their future careers.

It is important to note that adopting the computer science standards within HB 170 is entirely permissive, meaning that each local school district can decide whether they wish to adopt them, and even if adopted by the schools, parents and students ultimately make the final decision. Many students struggle with math and science thereby they face frustration and discouragement when taking courses such as Algebra II. This new option could be critical to the success of student's high school careers. Additionally, the exposure to computer science could uncover a student's passion for computing which could ultimately lead to a fruitful career.

Chairman Brenner, I once again thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of the Ohio Chamber as a proponent of House Bill 170. I would be happy to answer any questions that you or members of the committee may have at this time.