



*BEFORE THE HOUSE EDUCATION AND CAREER READINESS COMMITTEE
PROPONENT TESTIMONY ON HB 98
TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 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 98. 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.

House Bill 98 provides access to representatives of for-profit and not-for-profit career and higher education organizations with the purpose of presenting their respective opportunities to high school students. This legislation is timely, in that there is an immense focus on the workforce demands of employers. We continue to hear that many skilled jobs remain unfilled; likely as a result of students not being aware that they exist, or the educational path necessary.

The goal of HB 98 is not to take away local control, in fact the bill preserves local control by allowing each school district to determine when and how the representatives gain access to students. For instance, presentations could be paired with an already existing job fair. Or, schools could designate a certain day of the week and provide representatives access to a

common area in which to display materials and speak with students. Those are just two of the ways in which access can be structured. It is also important to point out that within this legislation, the opportunity to present career and educational materials to students is in no way meant to be aggressive, intrusive or disruptive. The interactions can either be one-on-one or in a group setting; once again the schools have the control to decide.

Thus, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the Education and Workforce Development Committee view HB 98 as an additional tool for employers to educate and inform high school students of the sustainable, good paying in-demand careers. Businesses are merely looking for some guarantee that they will not be rejected when attempting to promote their trade. Chairman Brenner, I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 98 and welcome any questions at this time.