



*BEFORE THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
PROONENT TESTIMONY ON SUBSTITUTE HB 170
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2017*

Chair Lehner, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today regarding Sub. 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 heard last week from the bill sponsors, Sub. 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 proficiency in computer science or coding better prepares students for the workforce or the next step in their education. It provides practical knowledge, or as one of our members stated "a more tangible application learning process." I take that to mean that the skills and knowledge gained through successful completion of a computer science course actually translate into competencies used in their future careers.

It is important to note that adopting the computer science standards within Sub. 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 facing 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. Finally, as a result of language added to the sub-bill in May, if a student chooses to substitute computer science for Algebra II, the school shall communicate to those students that Algebra II is an admission requirement for some colleges and universities.

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