



BEFORE THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
Proponent Testimony on House Bill 98  
Wednesday, February 7, 2018

Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 98, legislation that would require school boards to allow in-person opportunities to present career information to high school students.

The Ohio Chamber is the state's leading business advocate, representing nearly 8,000 companies doing business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

HB 98 is timely legislation, in that workforce development and finding workers to meet the demands of businesses for present and future needs is an immense challenge for nearly every employer. In fact, in quarterly surveys conducted by the Ohio Chamber Research Foundation, workforce is almost always identified as one of the primary concerns of business leaders. Further, we regularly hear from our member companies that many skilled jobs remain unfilled. Contributing to this is the fact that many students are not aware that such opportunities exist, or what educational path is available to reach their goals.

HB 98 will help by introducing students to exciting job fields they are unaware of, and how they may get there. It is straightforward legislation that gives employers, along with universities, trade schools, and military recruiters, the opportunity to present career information twice a year to high school students. This right does not exist in Ohio law today, to the detriment of all.

The goal of HB 98 is not to take away local control. In fact, the bill preserves it by empowering each school district to determine when and how 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 many ways in which access can be structured.

It is 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, schools have the ability to determine this.

The Ohio Chamber views HB 98 as an additional, beneficial tool to help employers educate and inform high school students about sustainable, good paying, in-demand careers. We urge your support for this legislation.