



House Economic and Workforce Development Committee
House Bill 1
Proponent Testimony
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Good morning Madam Chair Baker, Vice Chair Romanchuk, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Committee, and thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 1. My name is Kelly Wallace, and I am the Director of Adult Workforce Education at the Career and Technology Education Centers of Licking County, better known as C-TEC. I testify as an interested party on behalf of **The Ohio Manufacturers' Association's Work Group on Manufacturing Career Pathways**, of which I am a member, and the **Ohio Association of Career Technical Education** and **Ohio Association of Career Technical Superintendents**, both of which represent the 49 Ohio Technical Centers that provide post-secondary workforce education and training in career-technical planning districts throughout the state.

I have spent an entire career designing certification and credential programs, promoting these credential possibilities to adults in Central Ohio, and developing business/industry/education partnerships that help establish a direct pipeline of qualified talent to high demand jobs. Based on this experience, I testify in support of House Bill 1's focus on three key areas of workforce development. First, it allows students to use grants for both degrees and certifications leading to verifiable high demand jobs. Second, the bill requires grants to be distributed in a back-loaded system upon completion of milestones especially experiential learning requirements. Third, and maybe most important, the bill sets aside dollars needed to promote these workforce grant opportunities to students and potential students in Ohio.

However, on behalf of the Associations, I ask that the bill be amended to include Ohio Technical Center students as eligible grant recipients. Ohio Technical Centers are uniquely positioned to reach a broad range of adult learners, and including OTC students will broaden the impact of the bill to the benefit of the grant recipients and the state as a whole.

The following are first-hand examples of how Ohio Technical Center programs can change the lives of adult workforce education students:

- 1) Student 1 is a Cuban refugee who migrated to Newark, Ohio and wanted an opportunity for both education and a high paying job. He struggled to get financial aid to attend C-

TEC's Industrial Multi-Craft Maintenance, 900 hour, One Year Option Program, but ultimately he completed the certificate and was immediately hired as a maintenance technician by Axiom Plastics in the International Beauty Park in New Albany at a wage over \$20 per hour. In support of his pursuit of an Engineering Degree while working full-time, Student 1 earned 30 semester hours from Columbus State toward that degree from his certificate at C-TEC.

- 2) Student 2, a graduate of Pickerington North High School, dropped out after his first year at the University of Alabama. His family helped guide him to pursue a one year CNC Machinist Program at C-TEC based on his grandfather's successful career as a Machinist. After only two months in the program, he obtained a paid internship position with Fidelity Tool and Die and, upon completion of his program, a job with excellent wages. Student 2 is currently working towards experience as a Mold Maker, which is a high wage position.
- 3) Student 3 decided he wanted to be a pipe welder after his family farm was sold and he enrolled in C-TEC's new Structural and Pipe Welding program. Despite his difficult financial situation, he was able to participate in the program through a paid welding internship and student loans. He received five different welding certifications culminating in the API 1104 pipe welding certification. He was offered numerous positions to work at an extremely high wage to travel to work on pipelines but finally took an offer to work at R&R Pipeline in Newark Ohio. Student 3 is making an excellent wage and remains in Ohio.

In addition to the employers mentioned above, C-TEC regularly places students and graduates in positions with the Ariel Corporation, THK, Hirschvogel, Bayer Material Science, Owens Corning Fiberglas, KDC and many more. These connections are crucial to carrying out the intent of this Bill: to incentivize students to choose degrees or certificates in high demand-high wage fields and to stay in Ohio to allow our economy and manufacturers/employers to expand.

Unfortunately, many individuals who are considering the intense, rigorous Ohio Technical Center certificate programs ultimately do not enroll because they cannot afford the tuition. The Workforce Grants and Tax Credits would be a long needed catalyst to help students pursue these jobs and stay in Ohio. More high school students and unemployed/under-employed adults need to hear about these opportunities and organizations like the Ohio ACTE welcome the help to advance the message that is at the core of their member institution's mission.

We believe that the above-mentioned Ohio Technical Center programs are uniquely positioned to help achieve the goal of providing high quality training for in-demand fields to adult learners who will stay in Ohio. On behalf of the OMA, Ohio ACTE, and OACTS, I ask that Ohio Technical Center students be included as eligible recipients in House Bill 1.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I'll be happy to answer any questions.