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Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation – Board of Directors
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Chairman Lhota and members of the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation Board of Directors, thank you for allowing me to testify before you today. My name is Chris Kershner and I am Vice President of Public Policy & Economic Development for the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce. The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce represents 2,900 businesses in southwest Ohio and is the administrative arm of the Dayton/Miami Valley Safety Council. The Dayton/Miami Valley Safety Council was founded in 1932 and grew to approximately 150 employer members in 2000. Since 2000, our membership has grown to over 360 employer members (an increase in membership of over 130% in the last few years). The Dayton/Miami Valley Safety Council hosts monthly safety education and training breakfasts that realize an average attendance of over 200 members and an annual Safety Conference that hosts 20 different safety training and education sessions for over 350 attendees. All of our monthly programs and the annual safety conference provide a venue for employers to learn about cutting edge safe working environment trends and take this vital information back to their workplace, to educate their co-workers and implement the safest possible working environments.

I would like to begin by thanking you for making safety training and education a priority, and for your commitment to building strong partnerships with the safety councils throughout Ohio. Additionally, I would like to commend the Division of Safety and Hygiene on their commitment to workplace safety and their dedication to ensuring safety training and education are a priority for the Ohio BWC. The growth of the Dayton/Miami Valley Safety Council is a direct result of the collaboration between the Division of Safety and Hygiene and the Dayton/Miami Valley Safety Council. This partnership and commitment to local safety councils has been instrumental in the growth of workplace safety training and education in the Dayton region.

We have also appreciated the partnership the safety council has maintained with BWC for the collection and submission of the BWC semi-annual reports. However, we have concerns about the decrease in the grant funding from the BWC to support the administration of this effort. As our safety council membership has increased by over 130%, the administrative grant from the BWC has decreased by over 31% in the last three years. The Dayton/Miami Valley Safety Council would respectfully request that this grant be restored to the FY 2007 amount, with a pro-rated increases or decreases that are directly correlated to future safety council membership growth and processing of semi-annual reports.

To continue, I would like to address the Division of Safety and Hygiene's 2+2 Safety Incentive Program, which is administered by the local safety councils. The Safety Incentive Program has allowed thousands of employers in Ohio to receive rebates on their BWC premiums that they are then able to devote to safety training and education back at their workplaces. The Safety Incentive Program has been an integral component for expanding the scope of safety

training across the State of Ohio and has allowed safety councils to focus on the newest trends in workplace safety and education for Ohio employers. Additionally, the 2+2 Safety Incentive Program has been a catalyst for engaging new businesses and employers in safety education and training. The Safety Incentive Program provides a much a much needed enticement to get new businesses in the door so that they can start realizes the value and importance of workplace safety education and training. The Dayton/Miami Valley Safety Council would respectfully request that the 2+2 Safety Incentive Program remains in place as it is administered today and it is allowed to be utilized in conjunction with group rating discounts.

Since it was announced earlier this year, that employers could no longer receive group rating discounts and safety council incentive program discounts together, we have seen a decrease in attendance at our safety education sessions by 19%. This represents about 40 employers in just the Dayton area, which are no longer receiving important safety education and training for their workers.

As you consider growing or changing any of the safety council programs, administration or incentive programs, I would be happy to serve as a resource and provide feedback for any potential changes.

Again, thank you for allowing me to testify today and I am happy to answer any questions you many have.