

Julissa Antigua Testimony (Wilcox Tech)

Good afternoon, my name is Julissa Antigua and I am your SkillsUSA state parliamentarian. With me are Steven Dominguez who is your state treasurer and Samantha Roccapiore who serves as SkillsUSA state secretary.

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industrial representatives working together to ensure that America has a skilled workforce. For those of you who didn't know SkillsUSA is an organization that allows students to show and exercise leadership, trade skills and knowledge. SkillsUSA is not only a state organization, SkillsUSA is a national organization. SkillsUSA provides tools, scholarships and union jobs to students from technical high schools. Without technical schools there is no SkillsUSA.

All three of us are currently seniors attending Wilcox Technical High School, we know first hand all the unique qualities that make technical schools special. For example, we have a dual education in our schools. This means that out of our 182 day curriculum half is focused on academics and the other half is focused on trade education. Our students learn the same information any regular student from a public school would, the only difference is that we do so in half the time and with better results. In fact our CAPT scores are the highest in our city. Students attending technical schools are faced with a fast paced education similar to that of a college or university.

The students that attend technical high schools are there because they chose to. They know what they want to do with their future and know for a fact that they can benefit from a technical education. This is why the lottery system wont work, students either want a technical education or they don't. There is a reason why we receive a lot of applications and why the technical schools get a good share of the most outstanding students. We must be doing something right! Technical schools have come a very long way. Many of us have been able to witness 100 years of achievements and it only gets better from here.

All of the technical schools work together under a standard district model, If this bill is passed the structure of this model will eventually collapse along with the quality and standards of a technical education. In my opinion, putting the technical schools under another district is not in the best interest of the technical schools and their students. A different district will not be able to uphold and continue the progress we have made through many years of hard work.

In my experience attending a technical high school with an annual yearly progress has enforced a more productive attitude me. Since I began my journey at Wilcox Technical High School I have grown closer to becoming the person i want to be and achieving my goals. The teachers as have a great part in this development. Our teachers are very skilled and helpful, they know each student as an individual and constantly push them to strive academically. Also in the shops or trade areas, instructors keep up with the latest industry demands and needs to make sure students are prepared for the work force once we graduate. Attending a technical school has had a huge impact on my life. My high school experience is very different that my friends' in public schools. As a SkillsUSA state officer I've had the privilege to witness the great works of students from technical schools and what they have to bring to the table. It truly amazes me how much knowledge and potential these students have. Overall each student has endless opportunities available to them, whether they chose to continue their education, go into the work force or pursue another career they will fully prepared.

Finally, as current technical high school student I'd like to ask all of you to consider this testimony and my fellow classmates' as well. I'd like to leave you with this the fallowing question: Would you trust a carpenter, plumber, nurse or chef with your home, your life or your children's life if they did not have the proper skills and knowledge needed to perform the task asked of them?

Thank you for your time and for allowing me to share my testimony with you today.