

**BEFORE THE HOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE, AND LABOR
COMMITTEE**

HOUSE BILL 211

**TESTIMONY OF
BLAINE SWAN, CHAIRMAN
OHIO ASHI JOINT CHAPTER LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

Good afternoon Chairman Young, Vice Chair DeVitis, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 211, home inspector licensure legislation. My name is Blaine Swan. I've been a Professional Home Inspector for 15-plus years in Ohio as well as Canada. By way of brief background, my experience in the home inspection industry includes the following:

- Current Vice President of Ohio ASHI
- Current Member of Board of Directors, ASHI National
- Past President, Canadian Association of Home and Property Inspectors
- Consultant to the Ontario Ministry of Consumer Affairs in crafting Home Inspection Licensing Legislation
- Subject Matter Expert to CSA A770 Home Inspector Standard
- Subject Matter Expert to the NHIE (National Home Inspector Examination)
- Committee member, Standards of Practice (ASHI and CAHPI)
- Examiner with the National Certification Program in Canada

I am here before you today as the Chair of the Ohio American Society of Home Inspectors Joint Chapter Legislative Committee (JCLC). The JCLC is formed by representatives from the three chapters of the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI) representing home inspectors from across the State of Ohio. The goals of the JCLC are to monitor, review, contribute to, consult with, and communicate the development and progress of this legislation to our members. As well it is our desire to be a valuable education resource to those wishing to develop legislation that will impact our industry.

The American Society of Home Inspectors, ASHI for short, was formed over 40 years ago by a group of home inspectors who saw the need to bring consumer awareness and professionalism to a new and developing industry. ASHI membership in the U.S. has since grown substantially and is currently in excess of 8,000 members. Within the State of Ohio, there are approximately 400 members, with double that amount as unaffiliated ASHI members.

As stated earlier, one of the JCLC's goals is to educate. So I feel it is important to formally state ASHI's Mission Statement: "To set and promote standards for property inspections and to provide the education programs needed to achieve excellence in the profession and to meet the needs of our members."

Through ASHI's continued efforts, ASHI's Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics are the baseline for ASHI home inspectors, and an expectation of performance by consumers. These standards have now been incorporated into many state licensure programs and are recognized by consumers as the authoritative standard for professional home inspection.

It is important to note that ASHI is a "not for profit" organization governed by a Board of Directors elected from and by the membership. ASHI is the only Home Inspector organization in North America to have achieved third party accreditation from the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA)¹. Thus, the home inspector certification offered by ASHI is not a self-bestowed title. It is a validation by an unaffiliated third party of the process an individual ASHI member goes through to become a Certified Inspector. The use of a third party provides reliability to the certification process.

To become an ASHI Certified Inspector, members must complete 250 inspections, have their reports verified to be in compliance with the Standards of Practice and must pass the National Home Inspector Exam. ASHI has adopted the National Home Inspector Examination (NHIE) as the knowledge test for Certified Inspectors. The NHIE is industry recognized as a proctored, psychometrically valid exam and as a verifiable knowledge competency exam. Why? Because ASHI aims to raise the bar for consumers and the home inspection profession. ASHI Certified Inspectors must also meet regular Continuing Education requirements to

¹ <http://www.ashireporter.org/HomeInspection/Articles/ASHI-Certification-Committee-Answers-Your-Questions/1837>

sustain certification. ASHI's focus on continuing education to keep home inspectors informed of standards and new developments in the industry is just one of the reasons ASHI is special and a leader in the home inspection profession.

The JCLC recognizes the significant amount of work that has already gone into crafting House Bill 211, and looks forward to continued work with the legislature and interested parties to improve the bill. The JCLC would like to go on record as being in support of the "consumer protection" spirit of H.B. 211. In addition to the important consumer protection provisions in the bill, going forward the JCLC would like to explore opportunities for protection of home inspectors from unreasonable expectations and protection from qualifying hardships.

The JCLC has been reviewing the bill, has taken part in several meetings over the past month, and looks forward to continued work in the weeks and months ahead. We want a good bill. We want increased consumer protection. We want qualifiers that offer better protection for consumers and qualifiers that set achievable requirements for licensing of Home Inspectors in Ohio. The bottom line is that we would like to play a part in achieving home inspector licensure legislation that protects Ohio's consumers and provides reasonable standards to ensure competency and professionalism in the industry. Our offer to the bill sponsor, Representative Hughes, and to the members committee is to be, and continue to be, a consulting resource for issues concerning and impacting the Home Inspection profession in Ohio as well as the final and future content of House Bill 211.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, for the opportunity to testify before you today and for allowing us to be part of this process. This is important work. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Blaine Swan – Ohio ASHI JCLC Chair

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