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**HB 705 Proponent Testimony**  
**House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee**  
**November 28, 2018**

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Minority Member Clyde and members of the Committee. My name is Maria Rellinger, treasurer/CFO for the Apollo Career Center and Secretary/Treasurer for the Ohio Association of School Business Officials Board of Directors. I am here today to testify in support of House Bill (HB) 705.

I have been a treasurer for 11 years. Prior to being a treasurer, I worked as an assistant auditor with the Auditor of State of Ohio for over 5 years. I am very concerned about the future of the school business profession because of the risks school treasurers currently face. HB 705 would go a long way toward alleviating the fear and anxiety that exists today for me and my peers.

OASBO's executive director Jim Rowan has shared with you the financial risk that school treasurers are currently exposed to. I want to make you aware of another liability my colleagues and I live under. I was recently asked by one of my peers to testify on his behalf at a hearing conducted by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) Office of Professional Conduct regarding his treasurer license. I had worked with him on OASBO committees and through chapter activities and I was happy to testify as to his professionalism and character from my experience. The hearing was part of an ODE investigation as to whether he had committed an act that was unbecoming of the profession.

My colleague had a written opinion from his district's legal counsel to the effect that the treasurer should pay a certain employee on behalf of the board of education. Yet because the employee in question did not in fact have a license, the ODE legal counsel said the school district attorney's legal opinion was irrelevant. Despite that the payroll person is hired and supervised by someone outside the treasurer's office in this district, the treasurer is still held responsible for the mistake with no recourse other than to try to catch any future mistakes before payment is made.

The hearing in this case took place just recently, but the incident in question took place two and a half years ago. The outcome of this ODE investigation has not yet been determined, but my colleague has experienced a great amount of stress and anxiety as a result of the investigation itself. He did not have a say in whether or not to hire the employee in question, yet the ODE Office of Professional Conduct could recommend to the state board of education the removal of his professional license.

It is my understanding that some school treasurers have been subjected to performing community service and other punishments as a result of similar investigations. Even though payments are made in error (unbeknownst to the treasurer), it is the treasurer who has his/her financial assets and their professional license at risk.

On behalf of my professional colleagues, I urge you to take action to remove this risk. We are very willing to take responsibility for those things over which we have control. HB 705 does not remove accountability for school treasurers; it simply recognizes that people are human and mistakes will be made, especially when relying on information provided by other school staff. Yet, under current law, it seems as though the stakes are too high to fit these situations.

This concludes my testimony. Please vote to recommend HB 705. I will be happy to address your questions.