



Testimony of Alesha Washington  
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Before the House State and Local Government Committee  
House Bill 492  
May 16, 2018

Chairman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, and members of the Committee. My name is Alesha Washington – I represent the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP), Northeast Ohio’s metropolitan chamber of commerce. Thank you for the opportunity to provide interested party testimony on substitute House Bill 492.

GCP is the largest chamber of commerce in the country with 10,000 small, mid-market and large member companies. Our mission is to mobilize private sector leadership, expertise and resources to create jobs and leverage investment to improve the economic vitality of Northeast Ohio. We do that in many ways, including supporting the growth of minority and women-owned businesses in our region.

We are supportive of the intent of the introduced versions of House Bill 492 and 493 that would create a Women Business Enterprise program for Ohio as well as make the existing Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equity (EDGE) programs reciprocal with substantially similar programs in other states. This is an incredible opportunity to expand business contracting and growth opportunities for these companies.

However, we are concerned that the substitute version of House Bill 492 does not include the provisions that would make the MBE and EDGE programs reciprocal with other states as it proposes to do for the WBE program. It is important for Ohio to provide equitable opportunities for minority and women-owned businesses, therefore we strongly recommend that language be included in the final version of substitute House Bill 492 that allows reciprocity for the state’s existing MBE and EDGE program. Having this language included would allow us to fully support this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to provide testimony.