



Testimony of Kimberly Tapia

Founder & CEO

Polanko Group

Polanko Consulting

Polanko Cleaning Solutions

In Support of HB 492

Establishment of Women-Owned Business Enterprise Program & Procurement Goals

Chairwomen Anielski, Vice Chairman Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes and members of the House State and Local Government Committee.

My name is Kimberly Tapia and I am the Founder & CEO of three local business' – Polanko Group, Polanko Consulting, and Polanko Cleaning Solutions. I am here today to offer my support to House Bill 492 and to explain why I believe this change in policy will result in a positive impact for Ohio's business landscape and create a better opportunity for my fellow women entrepreneurs to compete statewide and regionally.

Polanko Group acts as a holding/parent company providing strategic support to small and medium size business' in return for shares of that company. Polanko Consulting blends modern and traditional consulting methodologies with Lean Six Sigma principles to create sustainable solutions for our clients. Polanko Cleaning Solutions offers commercial and post-construction cleaning services. After four+ years of being established here in Ohio the Polanko family of business' has employed countless residents and serviced over 85+ clients. Through volunteer efforts we have also prioritized community engagement and support.

There are two parts of House Bill 492 that specifically peak my interest. One, the establishment of a Women-Owned Business Enterprise program at the State level, and two, the opportunity to leverage this state certification while bidding on contracts outside of Ohio.

I am an entrepreneur, a United States Army Reserve veteran still actively serving, a minority of Latin descent, and a woman. I am just one example of many. Historically, women have been underrepresented as business owners despite our growth rate averaging higher in comparison to all business' across the United States. Though the Midwest on average ranks lowest across the nation in the establishment of women-owned business', I am a firm believer that Ohio, with the passing of House Bill 492 and creation of the Women-Owned Business Enterprise program, will become the standard-bearer across our region for this issue. Ultimately, House Bill 492 will afford women-owned businesses the chance to compete by making more opportunities available to us. This sends a clear message to the market that women entrepreneurs are welcome and supported here in Ohio. Our business landscape will be primed to evolve with an increase in women-owned business' all leading down a path to a healthier and more robust economy.

There are several milestones that mark key moments throughout the growth of a business. Obtaining my first out-of-state client was one of those moments for Polanko. After four+ years, each of my businesses currently provides services across state lines allowing me to expand my



brands reach. House Bill 492 provides the option to enter into a reciprocal agreement with neighboring states that would bolster the opportunity for women-owned business' to not only

be competitive in these states but achieve a key business milestone. This component of House Bill 492 establishes a point of entry for women-owned business' and adds depth to the market resulting in expanded product/service offerings, an increase in quality and customer experience, and driving innovation.

The challenges I face as a serial entrepreneur are limitless, and I wouldn't have it any other way. For each of my business' I have the same core goal – add value to our clients, create a dynamic work culture, continuously improve and extend our business reach. Though we as entrepreneurs are ***master risk mitigators***, sourcing and capturing new client opportunities can prove to be cumbersome. House Bill 492 establishes the framework for advancing women-owned businesses here in Ohio. Creating the Women-Owned Business Enterprise program, statewide procurement goals, and the option for state-to-state reciprocal agreements will open up more opportunities for women-owned business' and allow us the chance to achieve a deeper level of success.

I would like to add for consideration that the current certification process utilized for MBE/EDGE/WBE/VBE is extremely cumbersome, time-consuming, and a challenge to work through. As you consider House Bill 492, I ask you to also consider streamlining the certification process across all of the above options.

Thank you for your time, I am happy to answer any questions.