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Ohio House of Representatives Commerce and Labor Committee
Chairwoman Gayle Manning

November 20, 2019

Pete Newstrom
Arrow Lift

Thank you for your time and attention to this important subject. My name is Pete Newstrom, and I serve as Vice President of Arrow Lift. We are a family-owned and operated business, as well as a veteran-owned business, that started in 1985. We install and service accessibility lifts and specialty elevators in several states, including Ohio.

Regarding our industry: it has been said that companies like us work in “a niche within a niche”. The elevator industry itself is a niche, with relatively few companies operating in the space compared to many other construction trades. Within the elevator industry, the home and accessibility elevator and lift industry is an even smaller niche, primarily occupied by small, family-run businesses. The equipment we work with is typically limited to stairlifts, wheelchair platform lifts, dumbwaiters, home elevators, and a type of small, low-rise commercial elevator called “LULA” elevators, which stands for Limited Use/Limited Application, and is similar to a home elevator with sliding doors and some additional electronic features. These elevators are commonly used in places of worship and small office buildings, where full size passenger elevators aren’t needed, won’t fit, and/or would be too expensive compared to the needs of the building owner.

Regarding the proposed bill: because it threatens to prevent companies like ours from doing work we have been doing responsibly for decades, we must oppose it as currently drafted. We believe that the proposed bill raises two important questions, which should be addressed separately. First: is there sufficient regulation in place for elevators and lifts in Ohio, or do existing regulations need to be changed? On this first question, we believe that existing regulations for our industry in Ohio are reasonable although they could be strengthened. Currently, every non-residential elevator and lift we work on in the state of Ohio must be inspected by a state inspector before it is used by the public; it is also inspected once or twice per year after use begins. Currently, residential elevators are not inspected by the state, and we believe that the section in the proposed bill related to residential elevators, which would require one inspection before initial use, and another inspection if the home changes owners, would be reasonable as well. The second question the proposed bill raises is this: if additional regulations are needed, is this the right bill to accomplish that? We believe that the answer to this question is “no,” because the licensure requirements would prevent companies like us from continuing to work responsibly in our “niche within a niche,” as we have in years past.

Regarding the licensure requirements in this proposed bill: we view them as overly burdensome on home and accessibility elevator and lift companies. Rather than simply requiring a company license, the bill requires each individual mechanic to possess a license, and it requires the same license and training program to work on the limited elevator equipment we work on, as it does for a full passenger elevator and escalator mechanic. This “one size fits all” approach to elevator and lift licensure does not accurately reflect the differentiated nature of the specialized equipment companies like us work on. Furthermore, it favors larger firms, who have more resources to invest in the three-year training program that the bill requires, and it puts smaller firms at a disadvantage. One way to address this concern would be to create a limited elevator license for work on the specialty and accessibility equipment mentioned above. It is my understanding that several other



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states, such as Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and West Virginia, all have such a limited license in place. Another way to address this concern would be to continue regulating this type of equipment “as-is”—in other words, not require a license to work on this limited elevator equipment, which would still be inspected by a state elevator inspector. However, the proposed bill as currently written has the appearance of restricting who can do the work on all elevator equipment, including limited elevator equipment.

In conclusion, because the proposed bill would likely prevent companies like ours from doing the work we have been doing responsibly for a very long time, we oppose it in its current form. Thank you again for your time and allowing me to express our company’s concerns on this topic.