

Chair Paul Zeltwanger
House Economic and Workforce Development Committee
77 S. High St.
12th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215



June 11, 2020

Chairman Zeltwanger:

On behalf of small businesses across Ohio, I would like to express support for House Bill 258. This legislation provides additional options for individuals wishing to enter into a variety of skilled trades.

HB 258 allows candidates of certain occupational licenses to complete an apprenticeship in lieu of a traditional educational program. The bill prescribes three main provisions:

- The applicant must successfully complete the apprenticeship program
- Satisfy all requirements unrelated to education or experience
- Pass an exam

Particularly important to small businesses and employers is the inclusion of skilled trades such as heating, cooling, electrical, plumbing, automotive repair, and truck driving. Year-after-year, these occupations reportedly suffer labor shortages; in large part due to differences of opinions on how to solve the problem.

Contrary to what opponents may tell you, HB 258 is not simply a fast track to an occupational license. Opponents of the bill will likely tell you that traditional education programs that include rigorous classroom hours are the most effective way in which to produce qualified candidates. However, if the trades and labor unions are serious about addressing the shortages of employees they are facing, we would like to think that they would be open to exploring alternative paths for licensees.

SBCO believes that the hands-on experience provided by apprenticeships allow the candidate to see exactly what they will be doing once they become licensed. Further, access to educational programs are limited geographically and certain regions of the state are underserved. Not to mention the fact that many candidates are not good students and find classroom and textbook learning to be a challenge.

Finally, it is important to note that HB 258 would not create any undue burdens on state agencies or licensing authorities. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services already has experience with thousands of registered apprenticeships and should be able to seamlessly adapt to the changes contained within this legislation.

Chair Zeltwanger, thank you for your consideration of this letter of support. If you should have any questions, please contact me at 614-999-8773 or brandon@sbcOhio.com.

Sincerely,

Brandon Ogden
Principal, SBCO