



**Representative Bill Roemer**

**38<sup>th</sup> House District**

HB 673 Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill xxx, an important step in ramping back up our healthcare workforce, increasing access to healthcare and creating certainty by removing unnecessary burdens on employers and workers.

This legislation seeks to accomplish a number of items to help Ohio recover and reopen from the COVID-19 pandemic. I have grouped these items into three buckets:

### **Healthcare**

In order to increase our healthcare workforce, HB 197 suspended the requirement that a prospective nurse pass the licensure examination and permitted them to receive a temporary license to practice provided that they meet all other requirements. House Bill xxx would extend that date further until July 1, 2021 in order to speed up the pipeline between soon-to-be college graduates and the workplace.

Further, this would explicitly state that any hours a nurse works under a temporary license will count towards their clinical hours. Clinical hours are needed by the Ohio Board of Nursing before qualifying to take the nurses exam. It would be grossly unfair to have nurses actually working during this time but still unable to sit for their exams. The Board has not currently indicated if they will count those hours. I think it's only fair that they do.

Additionally, in order to get students who have fallen behind their nursing track due to hospitals and schools being closed, the bill requires The Department of Higher Education to conduct an RFP for schools that would be able to increase capacity and speed of courses. A similar construct was used for the College Credit Plus program to get more teachers certified in the last budget.

Current law allows pharmacists to administer flu shots to individuals seven and older. This legislation seeks to expand that provision to include any future COVID-19 vaccine and allow pharmacists to also test for COVID-19 and any antibodies. Pharmacists can help play

an important role in increasing access to healthcare, especially in a rural setting, to assist with the aftermath and any possible second wave from COVID-19.

### **Education**

Due to schools shutting down in early March, many teacher education students were unable to complete their student teaching hours. This legislation would codify guidance issued by The Department of Education to schools indicating that they should be flexible during the 2020-2021 academic year regarding the number of hours or weeks of field experience that a student must complete in order to be eligible for an education license or endorsement.

### **Removing Burdensome Regulations**

Many individuals and businesses owners are trying to keep their businesses afloat during these difficult times. The last thing they should be thinking about or worrying about is keeping up with their professional development hours. In order to provide relief, this bill suspends professional development hours until Dec 1, 2020, unless they can meet by virtual means. As a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) I am required to complete 120 hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) every three years to retain my certification. Most recently, in December 2019 over 90% of my CPE was completed on a virtual basis. This bill would allow for other professions to receive credit for virtual professional education.

Finally, this legislation would eliminate the temporary event salon license. Currently, cosmetologists and barbers who wish to cut hair anywhere other than their fixed location must obtain another permit. House Bill XXX would allow cosmetologists and barbers to provide services at homes, health care facilities and hospitals without having to file out burdensome paperwork or paying a fee. This would also increase the access to those at home who are at-risk and do not wish to travel or go out.

Thank you once more to Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee for this opportunity to testify on this important piece of legislation. I am eager to answer any questions that you may have.