

February 18, 2020

Dear Committee Chairman Schuring, Vice Chairman Rulli, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the General Government and Agency Review Committee,

The National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) thanks the committee for the opportunity submit testimony on Senate Bill 246 (SB 246). As an organization, NCARB supports the 55 U.S. licensing boards that regulate architecture by administering a national architectural exam and experience program, while promoting uniform standards and model laws. In collaboration with our licensing boards, our mission is to provide architects with a progressive licensing process and a streamlined mobility model, while ensuring rigor is met to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare.

By virtue of this letter we are asking to exempt the architecture registration statute from SB 246. We commend the committee for attempting to enable the freedom of movement for licensees in occupations that do not have reciprocity pathways established under current Ohio law. We strongly encourage not displacing the architecture system that already exists. Thank you for your consideration of our viewpoint on this matter.

Our concern with SB 246, as proposed, would result in unintended impediments for those seeking an Ohio architect license. Current statute and regulations enable the Ohio Architects Board (Board) to regulate and promote a clear and streamlined path to licensure. In summary below are the ways in which SB 246 will unintentionally impact existing architecture licensing and potentially negatively impact Ohioans:

1. The proposed reciprocal registration rules could hamper architect mobility; undermine the Board's authority and undermine carefully calculated architecture licensing procedures; and may harm professional integrity and consumers.
2. Most states' architecture licensing laws, including Ohio's, do not require a minimum practice period to obtain a reciprocal license if the individual is licensed in another state and otherwise satisfies certain requirements under state law. By imposing a one-year practice requirement, SB 246 would hamper mobility by limiting potential licensees eligible for reciprocity to practice architecture.
3. Reciprocity applicants are currently exempt from meeting initial registration requirements expressed in section 4703.07. However, the proposed amendment to 4703.08 would change this accommodation by requiring domestic reciprocity applicants to meet initial registration requirements. Therefore, domestic reciprocity applicants would be subject to meeting supplementary requirements.
4. The Board's authority to draft reciprocity requirements would be limited to foreign applicants and potentially disadvantaging licensees from states and territories within the United States. This limitation would result in internal inconsistencies of the statutory requirements for reciprocal registrants; obsolete

regulations; and preclusion of individuals licensed in U.S. territories. Additionally, applicants from U.S. territories may be unintentionally affected. Because SB 246 uses the term “state” rather the phrase “state or jurisdiction,” this provision would further hinder mobility. The Board currently accommodates reciprocity applicants from 50 U.S. states *and* five U.S. territories.

5. Current regulations do not define “registration authority recognized by the Board;” therefore, it would be unclear if the Board could recognize certain countries as permissible registration authorities. If a country is not recognized, OAC section 4703-2-05 would not comply with the proposed amendment under RC 4703.08, thus requiring new regulations.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joshua C. Batkin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

Joshua Batkin
Vice President
National Council of Architectural Registration Boards