



Proponent Testimony on behalf of House Bill 601 – To create a definition of Microbusiness  
before the Ohio House Commerce and Labor Committee

November 29, 2016

Sharon DeLay, MBA, SPHR, SHRM-SCP

---

Good Afternoon Chairman Young, Vice-Chairman DeVitis, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan and members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

My name is Sharon DeLay and I am the owner of BoldlyGO Career and HR Management, an HR consulting company that works with over 80 businesses in Ohio, many of which would qualify as a microbusiness. I am a dual-certified HR professional and also have my MBA and three additional bachelor's degrees. I have spent the last 15 years not only consulting with clients regarding human resources and business operations, but also as a board member on the Women's Small Business Accelerator, a 501c3 that helps women launch businesses, on the board of the Columbus chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners, an organization that supports women business owners with education, inspiration, and advocacy to grow their businesses, and the catalyst behind this microbusiness initiative, and two other industry-specific boards that support HR and professional development professionals who work directly with the employee development, retention, and recruiting needs of companies.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 601 and I would like to thank Representative Pelanda for introducing this important piece of legislation.



I believe, for the sake of today's testimony, I bring an important perspective to this discussion, because my company not only has a first-hand perspective of the challenges faced by these very small employers in an effort to attract skilled and affordable talent to grow their businesses, but also the desires of prospective employees to work for these employers, but they often cannot because these small employers aren't competitive when it comes to offering traditional benefits, employee development opportunities, and investments that will help those very small businesses grow and remain competitive in a rapidly changing economy.

In 2015, we helped hire over 100 employees for our microbusiness clients, and in 2016, we have attempted to hire many more. There is no doubt that it is a candidate's market. According to the Department of Labor, through 2024, it is expected that the labor market will continue to be robust, with over 100,000 more jobs created in a market that is already experiencing a high number of open positions. While many of these positions are in emerging areas of technology and science, or the typical healthcare and teaching professions, just as many are for dental hygienists, bicycle repair specialists, service workers, massage therapists, and home healthcare and personal care aids – all of these are positions we have recruited for our microbusiness employers. However, we have seen a significant change from 2015 to 2016 in our success in attracting candidates for these employers. What we see regularly is that our employers are losing candidates to larger businesses at an alarming rate.

Because microbusinesses have no way to compete with their larger peers on a level playing ground when it comes to accessing, affording, and offering things such as healthcare, retirement plans, a category of microbusiness could:

- Afford even greater relief in terms of business taxes so that their stronger bottom line can be reinvested back into their businesses for scaling up.
- Create incentives to attract and grow microbusinesses in transitional and emerging communities, to develop strong roots and lasting bonds that continue to grow and reinforce those communities.
- Provide increased access to affordable resources such as targeted training to develop a competitive workforce that will create competitive businesses.
- Restrict certain grants and funding opportunities to microbusinesses that will allow them to access affordable traditional and non-traditional benefits to attract and retain skilled workers, rather than focus on constantly replacing the staff they lose to better pay and better benefits, as turnover is known to be higher at smaller organizations due to the lack of these benefits and opportunities.

We hear that small business is the economic engine of the economy...that they are responsible for over 60% of the net new private sector jobs. On your committee of 15 members, that equates to 9 of you, if that helps give you a visual. Supporting the microbusiness category, and then creating initiatives to lift these businesses up, is good for our economy, our communities, and every individual in this room and that you pass on the street every day. Recognizing this category of microbusiness – passing HB 601 – is the first step in a critically important journey.

Chairman Young and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 601 that recognizes microbusinesses in Ohio. I urge your favorable vote on the bill and I am happy to answer any questions at this time.