

***Contact Information:***

Office: 614-644-6020

Email: Rep73@ohiohouse.gov

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Higher Education and Workforce Development

State and Local Government

Public Utilities

**State Representative Rick Perales**

**Community and Family Advancement Committee: 3:00pm, Room 114**

**House Bill 23 Sponsor Testimony**

**March 6th, 2018**

Chair Ginter, Vice Chair LaTourette, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the Community & Family Advancement committee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill 523 with my joint sponsor Representative Lanese who graciously asked me to join with her on this bill.

We are sponsoring common sense legislation which extends a helping hand to struggling families and the social workers who help them. Ohio and the Department of Defense provide excellent resources for its families, but under some circumstances, those options are not always entirely explored or utilized. These are resources that can provide much-needed assistance to these individuals. However, if not alerted of a problem, these agencies cannot help.

In addition to the regulations which Representative Lanese has already touched on, this bill is also comprised of several changes requested by the Counselor, Social Worker, & Marriage and Family Therapist Board. It allows the board to adopt rules establishing a new schedule of deadlines for renewing registration. It eliminates the requirement that those licensed under O.R.C. 4757 must prominently display their license at all times. Also, licenses or registrations would no longer expire two years after they are issued, but instead, must be renewed biennially. And finally, it requires those registered as Social Work Assistance to complete 15 hours of continuing education as a condition of receiving a renewed registration.

To date, there has been no pushback on this bill, to include the National Association of Social Workers Ohio chapter, who has been contacted about this bill. The Counselor, Social Worker, & Marriage and Family Therapist Board, who are tasked with these responsibilities, have specifically requested these provisions to ensure that they can implement the necessary regulations to continue to adequately and efficiently help the people of Ohio.

In summation, House Bill 523 increases the options and resources for hurting children, spouses, families, and animals. With the passing of this law, countless individuals will be made aware of access to helpful resources they may not have known existed. It also allows for much-needed reform to an organization tasked with taking care of some of our state’s most vulnerable individuals.

Chairman Ginter, Vice Chair LaTourette, Ranking Member Boyd, and Members of the Community & Family Advancement committee, thank you for this opportunity to offer sponsor testimony for House Bill 523.