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Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Antonio, and distinguished members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on House Bill 541.

I currently serve as a Commissioner in Ashtabula County and my wife as a public health nurse for the City of Ashtabula. We are both serving on the leadership team to bring Remote Area Medical (RAM) to Ashtabula County to provide a free medical, dental, and vision clinic to the uninsured or underinsured in our community and surrounding areas. We volunteered at a similar RAM clinic in Charleston, WV and were incredibly moved by the experience. We encountered medical professionals from Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and several other states who came to assist with that clinic. We will not be so fortunate at ours.

Our clinic is scheduled for April 20-22, 2018. Although I recognize that this legislation will not be effective in time to impact our clinic, we are seeking your support to impact future clinics and overcome one of the major challenges we are having: enough medical, dental, and vision professionals to see the anticipated patients. As a county bordering Pennsylvania, we found numerous professionals from that state willing to participate, but unable to, either because of complicated administrative requirements or fees necessary to practice at such a clinic. It is both unfair and unnecessary that these professionals should be forced to pay to volunteer their time for the betterment of the community and to improve the health and welfare of their fellow man. This is not the case in many other states and in fact Ohio recently followed the lead of some other states by allowing for CEU credits for these professionals to incentivize their participation.

Ohio has never hosted a RAM clinic in spite of the clear need not only in our community, but across the state. I am confident that lack of legislation such as this is a significant part of the reason. Although we have over 800 volunteers signed up to assist at our 3-day clinic, we have no more than 5 vision professionals on any day, 1 day with only 2. RAM strongly recommends 10 per day as this need is always a driver of the service since many patients, even if they have medical insurance, do not have or cannot afford vision coverage. The clinic will provide an eye exam, vision prescription, and new frames with a pair of prescription lenses when the patients leaves the clinic for those we have the staff to serve. For many of our school-age children, this will be their first opportunity to acquire glasses that will allow them to read what the teacher writes on the board in the classroom or properly see their reading materials. This could make the difference between whether they graduate high school or not, not to mention the associated social costs should they not graduate.

HB 541 would allow certain out-of-state licensed healthcare professionals to provide healthcare services as a volunteer during a charitable event without obtaining a permanent Ohio license or paying a special activity license fee to do so. It would still ensure high standards, allow for disciplinary procedures, and, being modeled after West Virginia's law, would not be reinventing the wheel to create a policy that works for the betterment of our state and its citizens.

Chairman Huffman and members of the Committee, thank you for allowing us to testify on House Bill 541. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

J.P. Ducro

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.P. Ducro".