

Senate Bill 79 Proponent Testimony
Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee

March 29, 2017

Good morning Chairman Coley, Vice Chairman Uecker, Ranking Minority Member Yuko, and members of the State Government Oversight and Reform Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony on Senate Bill 79.

Senate Bill 79 and House Bill 51 – its companion legislation – would reset the balance of powers in our state. It would ensure that executive agencies do not become bloated, inefficient, or stray from their original purpose, outlined in statute. By including executive agencies in the sunset review process, the General Assembly can hold accountable the executive branch, which currently exerts a tremendous amount of rulemaking power, with little legislative oversight, and no accountability from the people.

Senate Bill 79 focuses on efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. Conducting performance audits of state agencies periodically will keep agencies seeking efficiencies, saving tax payer dollars in the process. Naturally, performance audits will also assess whether agencies are fulfilling their duties and, if not, what we can do in the legislature to better assist them in meeting their statutory requirements. We are responsible to our constituents to ensure that government is not exerting unnecessary or superfluous regulation on their everyday lives SB 79 moves us in this direction.

Those who assert that this review is already available to the legislature through the budget process have oblivious to how hectic things have been during the budget cycle. Separating the budget from agency review will improve the legislature's ability to evaluate both fully and fairly, without rushing through either. SB 79 will ensure that the budget process remains dedicated to evaluating appropriations on policy, while a new agency review process will focus on mission alignment and performance audits.

Under SB 79, agency functions can be modified, redirected, or continued as justified by the facts and evidence. Agencies that are not reauthorized during the four-year cycle will “sunset,” and wrap up or transfer operations, during the next two-year budget. We should not assume simply because the legislature has the power to allow an agency to sunset that it will. Prudence will dictate when an agency ought to sunset.

SB 79 & HB 51 ensure government accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, and transparency. I urge you all to support the bills.

Thank you for your time,

Keith Faber

