



Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
Testimony on HB 404
Erich Bittner, Director of Government Relations
Ohio Association of County Boards of DD
11/17/20

Chairman Coley, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee; thank you for the opportunity to provide comments about House Bill 404 on behalf of the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities.

County boards of DD are seven-member boards appointed by their county commissioners and county probate judge. Members are not compensated for their service, and perform a number of duties set forth in chapter 5126 of the Ohio Revised Code. Those duties include a statutorily required minimum number of meetings.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, boards have been fulfilling their meeting obligations through use of the virtual meeting option provided under HB 197. Virtual meetings have provided necessary flexibility to keep board members safe while preserving transparency and accessibility to the public. That provision is set to expire on December 1. Without the ability to meet virtually, boards may experience difficulty establishing the quorum required to fulfil their various obligations to the people they serve.

For this reason, OACB respectfully requests that House Bill 404 be amended to extend the virtual meetings provision included in Section 12 of HB 197 until the termination of the declared public emergency, and to include an emergency clause.

Ohio's 88 county boards are committed to the safety and well-being of our board members, staff, and the people and families they serve, and this is one way we can continue to promote healthy communities. Thank you for your attention to these concerns. I am happy to make myself available for questions either before the committee or any members individually.