



**Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee
Opponent Testimony on HB 442
Ohio Association of School Business Officials
December 16, 2020**

Chairman McColley, Vice Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio and Members of the Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee, thank you for this opportunity to express opposition to House Bill (HB) 442, as amended. My name is Melcie Wells, President of Ohio Association of School Business Officials and Treasurer of the Warren Local School District.

Our organization represent treasurers/CFOs and other school business officials from around the state. We have a strong interest in ensuring that school treasurers, as chief financial officers of Ohio school districts, and business managers have the qualifications and expertise necessary to successfully manage and lead our public schools. My School District and community looks upon the School Treasurer as a leader and expert in the school finance realm and this confidence is rooted in the fact that licensure is a requirement of the position. Because of this, OASBO as an association and me as a School District Treasurer, strongly oppose the amendments to HB 442 that eliminate state-required licenses for school treasurers and business managers.

As a Treasurer for over 12 years, the understanding of the financial stability and operation of a school district is crucial in leading a District to provide the very best possible education of Ohio's students. School treasurers and business managers are responsible for the proper use of public funds needed to operate our schools. Qualified school treasurers and business managers ensure the overall financial health and stability of a school district. If qualified individuals are not in these roles, there is a serious threat to the financial stability of a school district that can result in fiscal emergency under Ohio law, which has a detrimental impact on an entire generation of students. Licensure of these individuals protects against this risk and reinforces trust in our public institutions and communities.

OASBO prides itself in taking a lead role to ensure that school treasurers and business managers have the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully manage and operate our schools. Treasurers, like myself, rely on other licensed school treasurers and business managers to collaborate on every aspect of school finance to determine best practices and efficient systems to District operations. Knowing that fellow licensed colleagues are well versed through the programming provided by OASBO as well as other associations and agencies across the state gives confidence to the collaboration needed to operate our school districts. Without the licensing component of the school treasurer and business manager positions, this programming and collaboration would be minimized.

The programming and importance of the programming mentioned before is evident in the work that our association has done with ODE to ensure that the curriculum developed closely mapped to the Ohio Standards for School Treasurers and School Business Managers. A copy of the Ohio Standards for School Treasurers and School Business Managers is attached for your reference. Through the mapping of the Ohio Standards to the OASBO curriculum, we developed five courses that each candidate through our pathway must take, including: Essentials of Budgeting and Forecasting, Essentials of Financial & Management, Essentials of Business Operations, Essentials of School Funding and Finance, and Essentials of Human Resources. After completion of these five courses, a candidate must then pass an assessment and successfully complete a capstone project that requires the application of their knowledge in creating and presenting a five-year forecast. The content of these courses covers the rules of school budgeting, forecasting, and managing revenues and expenditures under Ohio law, as well as the numerous other state and federal compliance laws, rules and regulations.

Treasurers like myself are responsible for maintaining the public trust in the financial integrity of the school district by following and complying with acceptable financial accounting, auditing, and reporting procedures.

Warren Local's Board of Education, staff and students, and entire community entrust me with protecting the fiscal health of the district. Licensure ensures that the individuals serving as treasurers and business managers are able to fulfill this expectation and shows professionalism that is expected of all District leadership. Licensure demonstrates that the treasurer and business manager know and are able to demonstrate the principles associated with school finance, budgeting, financial planning, accounting, auditing, financial reporting, cash management, investments, debt management, grant management and the technology to maintain the efficient financial operations of the school district.

As a school treasurer, I always have a seat at the District administrative table and am considered as an integral member of the district leadership team. School treasurers and business managers are called upon daily to advise district administration, the board of education and community on the district's finances so that they understand the district's financial position and sustainability, as well as the potential impact decisions have on instructional programs and personnel. In order to ensure the individuals serving in this leadership role have the requisite skills and knowledge to successfully lead and manage the finances of our school districts, we need to maintain the high standards required through all three of the pathways for licensure in Ohio and urge you to reject H.B. 442

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer questions from the committee.