



House Bill 181

Ohio House Commerce and Labor Committee

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Opportunity Solutions Project

Chair Stein, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Opportunity Solutions Project (OSP), a nonprofit dedicated to advancing policies that remove barriers to work. OSP supports House Bill 181 because it creates alternative pathways to licensure for certain occupations.

The average salary of a veterinary assistant in Ohio is \$28,080 a year.ⁱ This is one of the licensed occupations covered in the bill, and that's why HB 181 matters.

It can be a costly investment in time and money to earn a license, especially for those lower on the economic ladder.ⁱⁱ Among lower-income occupations in Ohio, it takes an average of 350 days of training and experience, between one and two exams, and \$188 in fees to earn a license.ⁱⁱⁱ

HB 181 would create an alternative pathway to licensure for select occupations. Under the bill, applicants would be issued a license if they completed a government-approved apprenticeship program and passed any requisite exams. Background checks and licensing fees would still apply.

Some trades already utilize the apprenticeship model as a pathway to credentials. HB 181 applies the earn-and-learn framework to other jobs with state licensing requirements, providing more people the opportunity to take home a paycheck while working toward their license.

States like Iowa, Tennessee, Idaho, and Arkansas passed reforms, applying the policy to most licensed occupations. Ohio should follow suit, and advancing HB 181 would be a strong first step.

Haley Holik, *Visiting Fellow*

ⁱ Bureau of Labor Statistics, "May 2020 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates," U.S. Department of Labor (2020), https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_oh.htm.

ⁱⁱ National Conference of State Legislatures, "The State of Occupational Licensing" (2017), https://www.ncsl.org/Portals/1/Documents/employ/Licensing/State_Occupational_Licensing.pdf.

ⁱⁱⁱ Dick Carpenter et al., "License to Work," Institute for Justice (2017), <https://ij.org/report/license-to-work-2/report/appendix/>.