



**STATEMENT OF THE OHIO STATE BAR ASSOCIATION  
IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 150**

Before the House Finance Committee  
Representative Scott Oelslager, Chair

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the Ohio House of Representatives Finance Committee: on behalf of the Ohio State Bar Association, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 150.

The OSBA estimates that over 2/3rds of counties in Ohio do not have enough lawyers to meet the legal needs of their citizens. This is a major problem that is only getting worse. To that end, the OSBA has made efforts to recruit attorneys to underserved areas through programs like our rural practice initiative and collaborative efforts with Ohio's law schools. But these efforts have not produced the results that are needed to ensure that every Ohioan has the access to justice they are guaranteed by the constitutions of the United States and Ohio.

House Bill 150 would incentivize the relocation of attorneys to underserved areas of the state through a service contract that could lead to up to \$50,000 of the attorney's student loans being repaid in exchange for an agreement to work in that area for up to 5 years.

The amendment before you today would make two main changes to House Bill 150 as introduced. First it would expand the program to apply to prosecutors in addition to public defenders and appointed counsel. We believe this is necessary as we have received feedback that prosecuting attorneys' offices have struggled in recruiting attorneys to underserved areas as well. Second, the program now requires that for a county to be considered underserved, it has to have a ratio of equal to or less than 1 attorney for every 700 persons. This ensures that the program is focused on getting attorneys where they are needed the most.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 150 and the proposed amendment. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

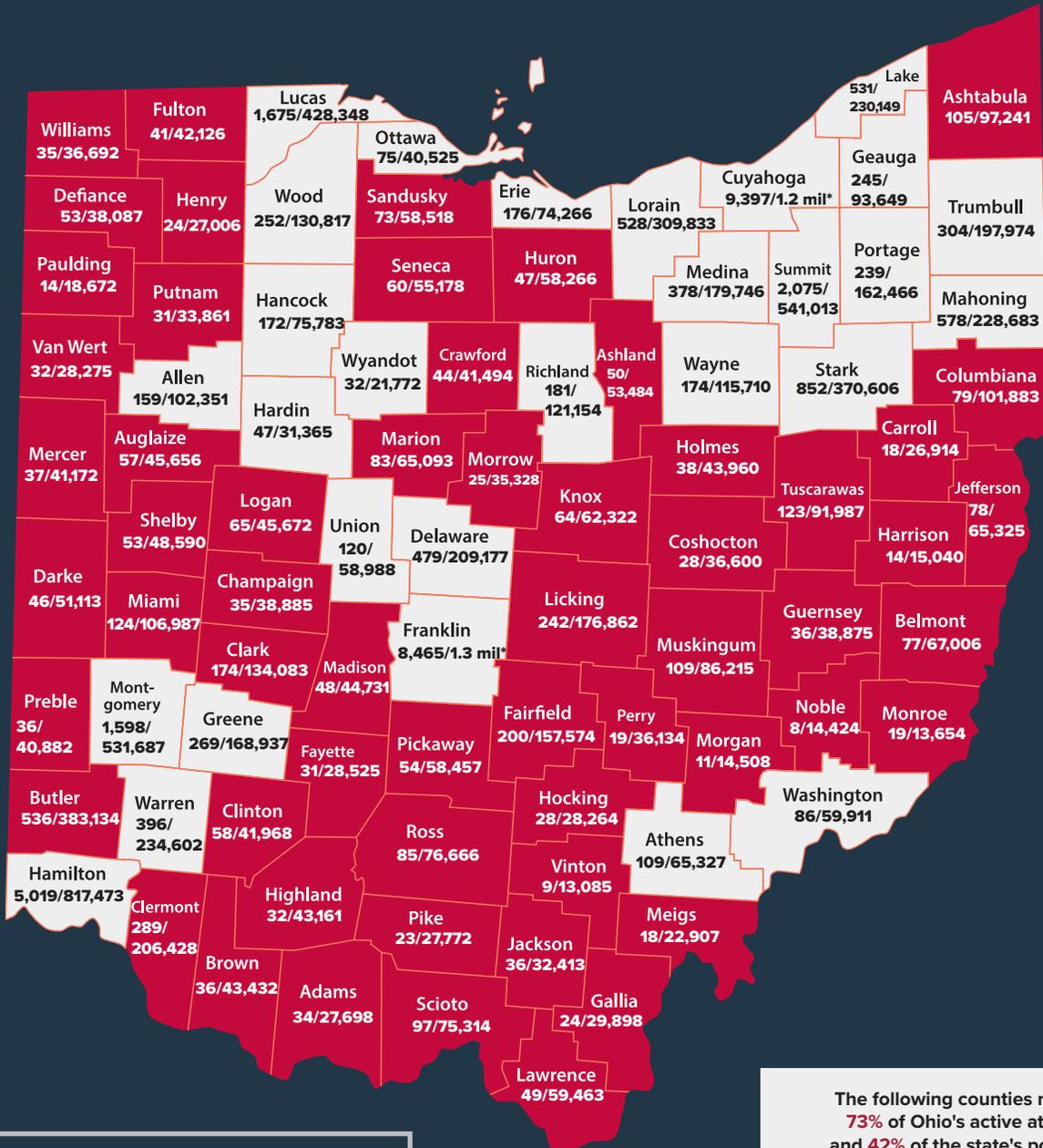
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# Ohio Attorney/Population Ratio by County



Ohio contains 59 counties with more than 700 residents per attorney.

- Counties contain a population to attorney ratio of more than 700 people per attorney
- Remaining counties with fewer than 700 people per active attorney

The following counties represent **73%** of Ohio's active attorneys and **42%** of the state's population.

- Cuyahoga
- Franklin
- Hamilton
- Lucas
- Montgomery
- Summit

**28,229/4,870,349**

Data compiled from Ohio Supreme Court and U.S. Census Bureau (Ohio County Population Estimates as of 7/1/2019).

Data compiled at a single point in time and may change throughout the year.

\*Rounded for space