



HOUSE BILL 203 -LICENSURE RECOGNITION

WRITTEN PROPONENT TESTIMONY

OHIO STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

MAY 5, 2021

Chairman Wiggam, Vice-Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the Ohio House State and Local Government Committee, I am writing on behalf of the nearly 22,000 governing members of the National Federation of Independent Business in Ohio (NFIB) to lend our support for House Bill 203. House Bill 203 will, in certain circumstances, require Ohio licensing entities to recognize licenses from individuals practicing professions in other states. We applaud Representative Powell for reintroducing this bill and continuing the dialogue on accelerating the ability for certain individuals to practice a vocation.

By way of background, a typical NFIB member in Ohio employs 20 or fewer and does less than \$2 million in annual sales. Our members come from every industry type, and our organization looks like Main Street in any legislative district across Ohio.

As was articulated by Representative Powell during her sponsor testimony, the number of professions requiring licensure has increased significantly over the last 50 or so years. Many of these licensures intend to provide protections for public safety and welfare while allowing consumers to know an individual has training and knowledge in their respective industry. NFIB certainly supports preserving public safety and welfare and does not believe any individual can call him or herself a "licensed professional" without the requisite training and validation. However, what we do suggest is for some individuals who have experience working in their profession and have been recognized as competent by another state or body, it makes sense to reduce their hurdles to practice.

While every licensure may not be identical across the states, there are certainly licensures that are identical, or at least, very similar. The reality is licensed individuals do not lose their skills simply by leaving one state and coming to Ohio. We believe House Bill 203 contemplates situations to ensure individuals seeking licensure are qualified under existing Ohio requirements. For example, House Bill 203 stipulates if a licensing authority requires an individual to pass an exam on Ohio's law and rules, they may do so for new applicants. The same holds true for other conditions such as criminal background checks and demonstration of financial responsibility which are also permitted under the legislation.

As a state with an aging workforce and a declining population that will lead to the loss of one additional congressional representative, we believe Ohio needs to find ways to encourage individuals who wish to or do relocate here, to be able to employ their skills expeditiously.

As reported in our NFIB monthly jobs report, 42 percent of our members are having difficulty filling open positions. This is an all-time high recording.¹ Of course, not all these employers have licensure requirements, but some certainly do. House Bill 203 provides an avenue for our members to have license-required positions filled more expeditiously. NFIB supports the intent of House Bill 203 to allow licensed and trained individuals to practice their vocation in Ohio as quickly as possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments. Please feel free to contact me with any questions the committee may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris J. Ferruso". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" being particularly prominent.

Christopher J. Ferruso
Ohio Legislative Director

¹ <https://www.nfib.com/surveys/small-business-economic-trends/>