



State Representatives
Allison Russo and Jamie Callender
Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 359
State and Local Government
December 7, 2022

Chairman Wiggam, Vice-Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and Members of the State and Local Government Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in favor of House Bill 359, which would create a state licensure process for art and music therapists.

Art and music therapy have become increasingly popular, non-medication based alternatives to traditional medicine. Studies have shown art and music therapy to be effective at reducing rates of depression, anxiety, stress and burnout, and generally improving an individual's quality of life and ability to cope with negative psychological symptoms.¹ These alternatives forms of therapy have been successfully used to treat individuals diagnosed with neurological impairments, mental health disorders, medical illnesses, substance abuse, as well as veterans and those struggling with loss, violence, or other trauma.²

As art and music therapy become more common treatment alternatives, especially for our most vulnerable populations, we must work to ensure that art and music therapists are properly educated, trained, and qualified to deliver quality care. Currently, there is no criteria in the Ohio Revised Code to ensure that art therapists and music therapists are qualified to perform therapeutic treatments and assessments, despite a substantial amount of research and evidenced-based guidance for establishing standards and best practices for these therapies. Already, art therapy is a regulated mental health profession in 15 states and the District of Columbia, including Connecticut, Kentucky, and most recently, Tennessee.³

HB 359 would allow Ohio to join these other states in protecting vulnerable patients and ensuring quality care by creating licensing requirements for the practice of music and art therapy and to be issued by the Ohio State Medical Board or the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist (CSW) Board respectively. The legislation would create the Music Therapy Advisory committee to provide expertise in the regulation of music therapy practices and empower the Buckeye Art Therapist Association to advise on practices related to art therapy. It would also establish clear criminal penalties for practicing as an art or music therapist without

¹ Regev D, Cohen-Yatziv L. Effectiveness of Art Therapy With Adult Clients in 2018-What Progress Has Been Made? *Front Psychol.* 2018 Aug 29. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01531.

² Beans C. Searching for the Science behind Art Therapy. *PNAS.* 2019 Jan 15. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1821297116

³ <https://arttherapy.org/state-advocacy/>

a license and make provisions for each board to establish standards for the ethical practice of art and music therapy and clearly define a licensee's scope of practice.

By creating a state licensure process for art therapists and music therapists, access to the critical services they provide would expand for individuals of all ages and ailments, as well as improve mental health outcomes and provide protections for consumers from unqualified practitioners. To protect our fellow Ohioans and enable them to access the most appropriate and practical treatment, we hope you will join us in supporting our art therapists and music therapists by creating a process by which they can be appropriately credentialed to practice in Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I will be happy to answer any additional questions that you may have.