



WORKFORCE AND  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 11-29-22

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Organization Representing: Ohio School Psychology Assoc.  
(OSPA)

Testifying on Bill Number: HB 509

Testimony:  Verbal  Written  Both

Testifying As:  Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist?  Yes  No

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Senate Workforce & Higher Education Committee**

**Nov. 30, 2022**

### **Opponent Testimony on HB 509**

**[Dr. Craig Hanthorn]**

Chairman Johnson and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 509. My name is Dr. Craig Hanthorn. I am a licensed school psychologist through the Board of Education as well as an independently licensed psychologist through the state of Ohio. These two licenses have been crucial for me personally and professionally. I am a single father of 3 adopted young men. I use this additional license as a means to offset some of the costs it takes to have a family of 4 on a single income. But I also benefit from this by being able to provide mental health services as well as assessment services to underserved individuals. There is a mental health crisis going on currently. Schools are not able to find enough supports as it relates for mental health. Community partners and agencies are not being able to fulfill requests for services; therefore, clients who are in need of mental health supports are being placed on waitlists for services. Further delaying treatment and access to mental health supports. Since obtaining my private license through the State of Ohio Board of Psychology, I have been able to fulfill some of those needs my community is facing. My Board of Education license only allows me to operate in the 4 walls of a school building. Having my private license has allowed me to expand the services that are being utilized for treatment and assistance in the community. I have been able to see clients within a therapeutic setting that allows me to address school behaviors and other school associated factors that impact a student's access to education. I have been able to provide private evaluations and assessments that otherwise are a challenge to obtain. Schools are understaffed in the realm of school psychologists and supports being offered. Currently, Ohio only has a school psychologist for every 822 students. The National Association of School Psychology recommends 1 school psychologist for every 500 students. That is a plus 322 margin. Seeing as schools are having barriers to identify school psychologist during the school day, the accessibility needs to be ongoing for supports for families to access beyond the realm of the school. Hence why many of us are accessing the private licensure that allows us to operate beyond school hours and beyond the school day. Assisting in our community in large part is to see gains being made with individuals.

Access to mental health is based on what is identified as a continuum of services. Creating tiered levels of support within the community as to not overwhelm other entities. Often

therapists and psychologists, including licensed school psychologists cover the Tier 1 levels of support needed to assist within a community. Providing that support eases the tension faced by hospitals, local treatment centers, rehabilitation centers, and at times even jails. Providing these supports allow Tier 1 supports to be administered and given to then ease the need on those identified Tier 2 levels.

The American Public Health Association along with the National Alliance on Mental Illness has proclaimed a mental health crisis in the United States due to the lack of therapeutic services available to the general public. The American Public Health Association states that the shortage of therapists has impacted an estimated 132 million Americans. More than 6,600 mental health practitioners are needed to fill vacancies. Removing licensure for individuals will further impact the crisis and directly impact the many constituents that you serve.

Removing the independent licensure for School Psychologists further pulls the absolute needed support necessary within communities, it furthers the gap within equity among communities, and it provides difficulties for established families. Pulling sources of incomes and livelihoods impacts communities and families directly. I implore you to reconsider this specific language to attach to House Bill 509. This language could be detrimental to the overall mental health of your communities and the state of Ohio. Pulling of these services could only hinder the already strained mental health network and the accessibility of services for individuals.