

December 12, 2022

I am writing to members of the committee today to ask that serious consideration be given to **NOT** making a proposal to add language to HB 509 that would eliminate the private practice licensure for School Psychologists under the Ohio Board of Psychology. According to State Representative Marilyn John, "The goal of this legislation (HB 509) is to make the state of Ohio the best place to work, live, and start a business, all while removing barriers one may have when attempting to enter a new career field." The original language proposed to reduce the number of required hours of professional development for renewal, extend the renewal period from two years to five years and decrease the associate renewal fee from \$365 to \$200 - all of which would certainly align with Rep John's statement. Proposing to eliminate the option for licensure as a School Psychologist by the OH Board of Psychology would do the exact opposite by restricting the settings in which these trained professionals can work. Doing so at a time when mental health concerns have been and continue to be substantially increasing and access to appropriate care is already limited does not seem prudent.

The licensure one obtains as a School Psychologist through the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) is completely different from the licensure one obtains through the Ohio Board of Psychology. The former allows one to perform the traditional role and function of a School Psychologist within an educational setting (usually private/public schools or through agencies that provide contracted services to these settings). The ODE license does not allow the individual to engage in private or agency practice. In contrast, the latter permits the individual to independently practice school psychology in private or agency level practice with the scope being restricted to school psychology and area(s) of competency. There has been and continues to be a growing shortage of School Psychologists, both nationally and at the state level. Working within this profession requires at minimum a Master's level degree (many have a Specialist level degree and some go on to earn their Doctorate). Restricting practice opportunities for those who have obtained this level of education within what is already a specialized field is sure to add to the ongoing shortage and worsen the existing challenges related to access to mental health services.

Personally, I met the requirements [hold at least a master's degree in school psychology from an accredited educational institution and have completed at least four years of school psychology experience—which is typically employment as a school psychologist on the ODE license (or other state's education credential)] and then sat for and passed the exam to obtain my licensure through the Ohio Board of Psychology as soon as I was able to do so. I have held and maintained my ODE license for 26 years and my Board of Psychology license for 21 years. I have been gainfully employed in a public school setting for the entire 26 years and have only used my Board of Psychology license a handful of times to provide independent educational testing. When I first obtained the Board of Psychology license I thought I may shift into private practice or at least do something 'on the side'. Life happened and I did not do so as much as I thought I might. However, I spent the time and money to maintain the credential rather than

letting it lapse so that I could do so in the future. It gives me options. As I am approaching the latter part of my career in education, I have been making connections that may allow me to use the Board of Psychology license after retirement to continue doing work in a private practice setting - an option my ODE license does not afford. It would be incredibly frustrating if after 21 years that option was suddenly eliminated and my ability to continue serving children and families is potentially eliminated.

I thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
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