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Good afternoon, Chairman Hillyer, Vice-Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 130. This bill amends two components of the Ohio Revised Code: the Notary Law and the LLC Law.

Just over five years ago, President Huffman and I sponsored legislation – which the Governor signed into law – that brought Ohio’s Notary Law into the 21st Century by permitting notaries to conduct their official duties in both an online manner or electronic manner, provided that the notary is up to speed with required training and has an active commission. The bill before this committee today strengthens Ohio’s Notary and LLC laws and it will vastly improve the business services offered by the State of Ohio.

If you read the chapter of the Revised Code that regulates notaries – Chapter 147 – you will find that some sections that have not been updated for decades. This bill modernizes and improves those sections.

Likewise, for almost thirty years, the LLC Law remained largely unchanged after being signed into law by Governor Voinovich in 1994. That is until our honorable colleagues from Northeast Ohio, Senator Roegner and Senator Manning, saw their LLC modernization bill signed into law at the beginning of 2021.

Now that those two pieces of legislation have been in law for a few years, we were able to get feedback from interested parties on how to improve those laws. That brings us to the bill before this Committee today. This legislation largely contains technical fixes and clarifications, but the main points addressed in the bill are as follows:

- On the notary side:
 1. Notaries will be required to cooperate with investigations by the Secretary of State, which is not in current law;
 2. Notaries will be required to take the oath of office in person;
 3. Notaries will be required to verify the identity of a signer by either personal knowledge or satisfactory evidence;
 4. “Charging excessive fees” will be considered a prohibited act;

5. A Notary will be permitted to charge no more than \$30, rather than the current \$25, for an online notarization. This is in order to help cover the cost of using the required software.
 6. A notary will be permitted to charge a technology fee of no more than \$10 for online notarizations. This is because notaries are always required to pay the vendor for the online notary software, regardless of whether an official act was carried out by the notary.
- And now on the LLC side:
 1. The bill allows the Secretary of State to charge a \$50 filing fee for a statement of authority, an amendment or cancellation of statement of authority, or a denial of a statement of authority;
 2. It also eliminates the \$50 filing fee for certificates of correction concerning the registration or assumed name of a foreign LLC;
 3. Lastly, the bill requires a certificate of merger to include the name and mailing address of the person or entity that will provide a copy of the merger agreement to shareholders, partners, or equity holders of the constituent entity.

Every successful businessman and woman understands this principle: in order to stay relevant, in order to remain accountable to your shareholders, in order to turn a profit – a business must continuously evolve and shift to the needs of the market and the preferences of the consumer.

So, doesn't it stand to reason, that the regulatory structure of which our businesses exist and operate in, should also be continuously evolving and shifting to the needs of the market and the preferences of the consumer? If we want the Great State of Ohio to remain one of the best places to do business, then we as legislators owe it to our constituents to ensure our laws and regulations are reflective of the 21st Century.

Thank you Chairman Hillyer and members of the House Civil Justice Committee. I stand ready to answer any questions or concerns you may have.