

May 13, 2024

Chairman Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani and all members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

My name is Constance Clark, a licensed dental hygienist in the State of Ohio. I served as President of the Ohio State Dental Board in 2018, served as a member of the Ohio State Dental Board 2010-2018, served as Program Director of a Dental Hygiene Program in the State of Ohio from 2010-2018, served as President of the Ohio Dental Hygienists' Association in 1982. Through my years of service to the dental community, I believe I have a sound understanding of the dental/dental hygiene compact from multiple perspectives. I encourage you to vote NO on SB 40. This compact bill is not in the best interest of the citizens of Ohio.

The proposed compact in SB 40 does not require a dental hygiene applicant to have graduated from a CODA (Commission of Dental Accreditation) approved program. Although dentistry has a uniform educational criterion, dental hygiene does not. CODA has worked to ensure minimum knowledge and skills be developed in the dental hygiene training with calibrated faculty and adequate equipment in training facilities. As a previous program director, I can tell you every hour of instruction is needed to help the student develop the knowledge and skills. Again, not every state uses the CODA standards for dental hygiene education.

Dental hygiene is a hands skills profession. Skills are not developed at the same rate amongst students. Some students need more time to become competent. Certainly, programs work tirelessly to help students develop the skills. The hand skill test is, outside of education, verification that the candidate for licensure has adequately developed the skills to safely practice. To ensure protection of the public, a hands skill test provides that confirmation. The proposed compact in SB 40 would eliminate the hands skill test.

A dental hygienist that applies for a compact privilege does not receive a license to practice in that state. The State Dental Board only has authority over those licensed to practice in the state of Ohio. If a citizen of Ohio wanted to file a complaint against a dental hygienist with only a privilege to practice, I am not certain the Ohio State Dental Board would have the authority to investigate the complaint. This would not be in the best interest of the citizens of Ohio.

Thank you for your time to consider these concerns. Please consider voting NO on SB 40.

With appreciation

Constance Clark, RDH