

Proponent Testimony of  
The Ohio Craft Brewers Association  
before the  
Ohio House Homeland Security Committee  
regarding  
House Bill 658

December 11, 2024

Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Ohio House Homeland Security Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 658 which would create a specialty license plate on behalf of my non-profit organization, the Ohio Craft Brewers Association (OCBA). My name is Mary MacDonald and I am the executive director of the OCBA.

The Ohio Craft Brewers Association is a nonprofit organization founded in 2008 that serves to unify the Ohio brewing community, market Ohio manufactured beers throughout the State and beyond, and monitor and promote a strong beer industry in Ohio. The OCBA provides membership opportunities for Ohio brewers, industry partners, and craft beer enthusiasts, and seeks to create a more collaborative craft brewing community.

For Ohio brewers, the OCBA offers advertising and marketing opportunities, technical and educational conferences and seminars, community-building connections between brewers and businesses that support the industry, numerous member events, insurance discounts, advocacy, and other benefits. Our 10<sup>th</sup> annual Ohio Craft Brewers Conference at the end of January offers 30 educational seminars about all aspects of operating a small brewery. Exhibitors at the event include regulators from the Division of Liquor Control, OSHA and the Bureau of Workers Compensation.

The OCBA represents more than 400 small and independent craft breweries operating in 77 of Ohio's 88 counties. Ohio's craft breweries produce approximately 1.15 million barrels of beer annually, support more than 12,000 jobs in the state and are responsible for more than \$1 billion in economic activity. Additionally they contribute millions of dollars and tens of thousands of volunteer hours to charitable causes. Our breweries are community gathering places, tourist destinations and catalysts for economic development.

The Ohio on Tap mobile passport app is one of our organization's most successful marketing efforts. Participants in the program can stamp the virtual passport on their cell phone at breweries around the state and redeem those stamps for different prizes. The more stamps they collect during a three year window, the more and bigger prizes they are eligible for: stickers, hats, t-shirts, flags, etc. We have given away more than 20,000 prizes since the inception of the program in 2017.

It is the logo for the passport app that we are proposing putting on a license plate to celebrate Ohio's small manufacturing breweries. The Ohio on Tap passport program encourages travel to and tourism in communities of all sizes around Ohio. There are currently more than 46,000 registered app users, 10,000-12,000 who are active at any given time. This license plate would appeal to brewery owners and employees, Ohio on Tap passport holders and others who want to support the work of our non-profit.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.