

Chair John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the State & Local Government Committee thank you for allowing me to present sponsor testimony on HB 198 To Designate April as Counseling Awareness Month.

As we work toward the goal of destigmatizing mental health, it is important to recognize the role that counseling plays in helping individuals work through difficult life situations and mental health challenges. Dedicated professionals can offer personalized care to people dealing with a variety of mental health conditions and teach them coping skills to effectively manage their situation.

In putting forward this bill our hope is that we can shine light on the importance of counseling and commit to make counseling more affordable and accessible for Ohioans. Furthermore, we want to highlight the need to attract young individuals to become counselors to help meet the increased demand we have seen over recent years.

April was originally designated as Counseling Awareness Month by the American Counseling Association in 2002. So today, please join us in codifying April as Counseling Awareness Month in Ohio.

Chair John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the State & Local Government Committee thank you again for allowing me to present sponsor testimony on HB 198, and we will be happy to answer any questions.