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51st House District

House State and Local Government Committee
Sponsor Testimony – H.B. 694
December 10, 2024

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair Dean, and Ranking Member Brennan and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to present Sponsor Testimony in support of House Bill 694.

House Bill 694 is the introduced legislative version of the Joint Sunset Review Committee's Report which makes recommendations on the nearly 170 entities that are subject to Sunset Review and set to expire on December 31st, 2024, if no action is taken by the General Assembly. Before diving into the recommendations that our committee made, I would like to give some background on the Joint Sunset Review Committee.

I served as Vice Chair of the 9-member committee that is made up of 3 Representatives, 3 Senators and 3 Governor Appointees. Our committee met several times between April and August to hear testimony on approximately 170 entities subject to sunset review.

Entities that are subject to sunset review are generally not statewide cabinet-level agencies but rather are any boards, commissions, committees, councils, or any other similar state public body required to be established pursuant to state statutes for the exercise of any function of state government and to which members are appointed or elected. These entities may operate under the umbrella of a statewide agency (i.e. Dept of Agriculture), multiple state agencies or be independent from any state agency.

Our role was to evaluate these entities and make recommendations to reauthorize those that are a useful/effective resource for the public and state, sunset those that are defunct or have completed their work and recommend any changes to entities.

Below is a summary of the recommendations our committee made.

We recommended reauthorization of 129 entities that requested to be reauthorized.

3 of the 129 were reauthorized with changes:

- Board of Voting Machine Examiners
 - Name change to Board of Voting Machine System Examiners and addition of a cyber-security non-voting member.

- Environmental Education Council
 - Name change “Environmental Education Fund Advisory Council.”
- Ohio Medical Quality Foundation
 - Retains, under Ohio’s Sunset Review Law, the Ohio Medical Quality Foundation until the end of December 31, 2025, and then abolishes the Foundation as a statutory entity on January 1, 2026.
 - Requires the Foundation, not later than April 1, 2025, to transfer all of its remaining unencumbered funds, to the extent possible under law and contract, to the Treasurer of State for deposit in the Medical Quality Fund, established by the amendment.
 - Requires the Foundation, after transferring its unencumbered funds to the Treasurer of State, to prepare a written report identifying: (1) any encumbered funds unable to be transferred, including the amounts still to be distributed pursuant to pending contracts, (2) the duration of any contracts in effect at the time of the report’s preparation, and (3) the dates on which any remaining funds will be considered unencumbered.
 - Requires the Foundation to submit the report to the Treasurer of State, Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the House of Representatives.
 - Requires the Treasurer of State to assume the contractual duties of the Foundation, as identified under any contracts in effect on January 1, 2026.

We recommended the sunset of 32 entities.

- 16 of these were at the agency’s request.
 - Director of Health’s Advisory Group on Violent Deaths
 - Sunset the advisory group at ODH’s request but ODH will continue to report on any activities regarding violent deaths to the legislature and governor on October 1 in the year following any federal funding received.
 - Supervisory Investigative Panel of State Dental Board
 - Abolish the Supervisory Investigative Panel of the State Dental Board but allow the Secretary and Vice President (new position) to continue the work of the Panel at the request of the Dental Board.
 - This change will make it the same as the State Medical and Nursing Boards which will ultimately exempt this work from future review as all licensing boards are exempt from Sunset Review.
- The rest of the entities are either defunct, completed its work or will have completed its work by 12/31/24.

Finally, the committee made a few other recommended changes including:

Reauthorize and exempt five federally tied entities from future Sunset Review including:

- Early Childhood Advisory Council
 - Early Childhood Advisory Council will also absorb the duties of the Child Care Advisory Council which was sunset.
- Emergency Response Commission
- Public Defender Commission
- Homeland Security Advisory Council

- Unemployment Compensation Review Commission

These 5 entities fulfill a federal requirement and/or serve a required purpose under federal law. We believe it is unlikely that future Sunset Review Committees will sunset these entities due to their continuing federal obligation. Therefore, our committee recommended exempting these entities from future sunset review processes to help streamline the committee's process and ensure that members can adequately dedicate time to the numerous other entities that will remain subject to Sunset Review. It is important to note that if federal requirement or obligation ever goes away, then these entities will revert to being subject to Sunset Review.

We also recommended reauthorizing and exempting two local entities from future sunset review which are the:

- Volunteer Fire Fighters' Dependents Fund Boards (private)
- Volunteer Fire Fighters' Dependents Fund Boards (public)

There are over 900 of these local boards across the state operating in their individual communities. To date, no Sunset Review Committee has received testimony from any of the individual boards and it is our understanding that these boards serve a purely local function ensuring that dependents of volunteer firefighters tragically killed or disabled in the line of duty received financial benefits through locally derived funds via the local Board.

Our last recommendation was that half of the entities be reauthorized for 2 years, and the other half be reauthorized for 4 years. This will help with the future workload of the committee given that this committee is intended to meet every General Assembly. We also did our best to group entities by agency and theme so that entities that operate under one agency will be subject in the same review cycle.

Chair, Vice Chair, Ranking Member, and fellow members of the State and Local Government Committee, I thank each of you for your time and interest in H.B. 694. I urge its swift passage so that these entities are not left in limbo on 12/31/24 when they are ALL set to expire if nothing is passed by this General Assembly and signed by the Governor. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.