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Sarah Fowler Arthur
State Representative

Testimony, HB 238-Occupational Licensure Review

Thank you Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Government Oversight Committee for allowing us to testify on House Bill 238, Occupational Licensure Review.

In preparation for this bill, the State and Local Government Committee did an extensive review of approximately 1/3 of Ohio's Occupational Licenses and prepared a detailed report on barriers to entry or burdensome red tape that could be reduced or eliminated for the betterment of Ohioans in or pursuing careers within these occupations.

HB 238 captures many of the recommendations within the committee report. We have also captured the general recommendation changes with updates to the boards and licenses that would be included in future reviews, as well as establishing guardrails for continuing education and professional development requirements related to state licensure.

I would particularly like to highlight the changes made in Real Estate education requirements, which would strengthen Ohio Realtor's professionalism, protect consumer quality, and reduce cost barriers to entry to a threshold similar to our surrounding states.

We've also worked with numerous licensing agencies and stakeholders in each licensing area to ensure that unintended consequences were considered in advance and worked through to balance required fees and education costs with a high commitment to quality and consumer protections.

Undoubtedly this bill would have been strengthened by the inclusion of the recommendations from the State Barber and Cosmetologists Board, which would have reduced bureaucracy and costs to Barbers by more than 50%. Operators of bouncy houses also brought concerns of industry stifling inspection costs and lack of emphasis in the right training areas. As the Government Oversight Committee moves forward with the next steps of this review, I hope these topics can be more thoroughly vetted and the regulatory processes improved to support all of Ohio's licensees in the most efficient, effective, and productive ways.

In summary, HB 238 follows through on the State and Local Government Committee's bi-partisan recommendations to eliminate licenses that are obsolete or irrelevant and to reduce fees for more than a dozen additional licenses. We are confident that this bill cuts bureaucratic red tape and will continue the good work of reducing barriers to occupational entry, incentivizing licensure of Ohioans in Ohio rather than losing them to more competitive surrounding states, and ensuring the continued health, safety, and quality of consumers through common sense standards.

I'd like to thank the committee for their consideration of House Bill 238 and welcome any questions.

Thank you.

Sarah Fowler Arthur