

Dianne G. Fidelibus
Proponent Testimony on House Bill 230
Ohio House of Representatives Health and Aging Committee

Representing:

The Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals Board

Vern Riffe Center

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Columbus, OH 43215

Chairperson Gonzales, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, Representative Sprague and members of this committee:

I am honored to be here today to provide support testimony for House Bill 230. My name is Dianne Fidelibus. I have been a licensed addictions professional since 1981. I previously served on the Chemical Dependency Professionals Board for 7 years, 2 of those as Board Chair. Since that time, I have remained active on the Board's Education sub-Committee as an educator and as a representative of The Ohio Coalition of Associate Degree Human Service Educators which is comprised of faculty and administrators from 15 community colleges throughout the State of Ohio. I am here, today, representing the Ohio Chemical Dependency Professionals Board supporting the proposed legislative changes found in House Bill 230.

The Chemical Dependency Board is a member of the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium also known as IC & RC. This organization sets minimum standards, testing and ethical guidelines for chemical dependency counselors and prevention professionals. Periodically, IC& RC adjusts or revises their credentialing standards to better meet the needs of the workforce and better serve those impacted by addiction. Since the Board's training and education standards are found in statute, it has created a significant delay in our ability to more readily and timely respond to changes made in the IC & RC standards. Although IC&RC has awarded grace periods in the past to allow states to update their requirements, this has posed a timing and communication challenge within the fields.

This Board has also done an outstanding job in working to meet the needs of Ohio's Chemical Dependency Counseling profession. Meeting the workforce needs of the addictions professionals in our state is vital. As additional training or work experiences are identified for professionals to best serve Ohioans seeking addiction and or prevention services, our Board needs to have a process that will allow for a more effective process and expedient these changes.

House Bill 230 moves these the specification for work and education requirement from statute within the Ohio Revised Code to rule within Ohio Administrative Code which will allow for a more efficient process for responding to the changing needs in the chemical dependency counseling and prevention professions.

As President of the Ohio Coalition of Associate Degree Human Service Educators, I also want to impress how important this bill is to the education system, throughout Ohio, that is dedicated to best prepare individuals entering this important profession. Many colleges work hard to ensure that our courses meet the required standards of the OCDP so our graduates are best prepared to enter this workforce. Considering the curriculum review process that educators have to meet in order to make significant adjustments, this bill will allow the Chemical Dependency Professionals Board to work more closely with educators providing a more reasonable time frame to adapt curriculum to meet any revisions identified to best prepare our workforce to meet client needs.

Therefore, I urge this committee to support House Bill 230. Are there any questions or additional information you need from me?