



Testimony in support of HB 492

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Chair Anielski, Vice-Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, my name is Sheri Chaney Jones and I am the owner of Measurement Resources Company, an organizational development and research firm helping government organizations use data-driven strategies to improve programs, outcomes and lives. I founded the company in 2008 with a bold goal: Help every mission-driven organization use measurement to accelerate social change.

I am also the Vice-President of Public Policy for the Columbus Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), which happens to be the largest chapter in the country, and I am pleased to be here today on behalf of NAWBO Columbus to offer our support of House Bill 492.

Many of our members compete for government contracts here and in other states across the country. They have discovered, however, that they are at a disadvantage when they are competing for contracts outside of Ohio. When applying in other states for certification as a women-owned business, Ohio women-owned businesses are told they are ineligible because they need to be certified in their “home state” that has a reciprocity agreement in place with that state.

House Bill 492 would provide a solution for Ohio-based companies, like mine and many of our NAWBO members, who want to grow their business and compete fairly outside of state lines. The bill would create a Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) certification program and allow DAS to enter into reciprocal agreements with other states that have similar programs.

In discussions that NAWBO has had with other states, their program officials are excited that they may get to accept Ohio companies into their programs and they never liked that they had to deny us as being ineligible. This legislation recognizes that in a global economy, businesses should not be confined to inside the borders of any one particular state.

Nationally, women-owned businesses represent 39% of all firms; however, a report entitled "Utilization of Women Owned Businesses in Federal Prime Contracting," prepared by the Office of the Chief Economist in the U.S. Department of Commerce, reports that women-owned companies are 21% less likely than their male-owned counterparts to win government contracts and only recently received just 5% of eligible contracts at the federal level.

Due to the lack of a woman-owned certification program in Ohio, it is unknown how many contracts are given to Ohio's women-owned business in the State of Ohio. We believe House Bill 492 will spur growth for women-owned business, which will translate into more jobs and economic development for communities across Ohio.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 492. I hope you will consider favorably passing this important legislation. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.