

**Testimony Before the Ohio State and Local Government Committee**  
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Chairman Wiggam and members of the committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Jesse Hathaway. I am a policy advisor for The Heartland Institute, a national nonprofit research and education organization. Our mission is to discover, develop, and promote free-market solutions to social and economic problems.

The Heartland Institute is headquartered in Illinois and focuses on providing national, state, and local elected officials with reliable and timely research and analyses on important policy issues.

Occupational licensing is an issue of which an increasingly larger number of everyday people and lawmakers across the country are becoming aware and seeking reform. Some rules are necessary to assure that doctors or public safety officers have the skills necessary to perform their jobs. However, over time, occupational licensing has become a way for existing practitioners of virtually every trade and profession to create government-enforced guilds, restricting new entrants into the job market as a means to reduce competition.

Lawmakers pass the rules under the guise of protecting the public, but they end up imposing major hurdles on the ability of Americans to earn a living. This includes people who have already demonstrated their aptitude to the satisfaction of the government, but choose to move to another state, such as Ohio.

House Bill 432 would grant universal recognition for all occupation licenses, regardless of the state in which the worker received them. The bill is similar to Arizona House Bill 2569, signed into law by Gov. Doug Ducey in April 2019, and several other state legislatures are already considering reforms akin to the ones being discussed today.

Our state is hemorrhaging residents at an astonishing pace. According to United Van Lines, nation's largest household goods moving company, 57.8 percent of moves including Ohio as an endpoint were outbound moves, leaving the state. Of those former Ohioans, 55.6 percent cited employment as a reason they were leaving the state, taking their tax money and families with them.

This out-migration means less money available for spending on the things people want and need from their government, including capital improvement, education programs, law enforcement, social safety-net programs, and so on.

In addition to the "giant sucking sound" of residents and families leaving the state for greener pastures, 4.2 percent of the Ohio civilian work force is currently unemployed, compared to the national average—a record-low 3.6 percent.

Ohio's economic fortunes have lagged behind the country's rise out of the recession for several years, indicating something is amiss with our policies and ways of doing things.

More than 650 different occupations require people to obtain government permission slips in Ohio, meaning nearly one out of every five Ohioans have to deal with government-enforced guilds before pursuing their dream career..

The reforms House Bill 432 would make are simple, but would significantly benefit the people of Ohio.

In so many words, as long as you have a license in good standing from another state, an individual be able to practice his or her profession here in Ohio. A license holder would still be required to meet the state's requirements for license renewal and continued education if he or she stays in Ohio.

Nothing would be taken away from those who already have "gone through the hoops," but the promise of opportunity and dignity of work would be exchanged to people who move to the state.

It is important to note the bill's reforms are hardly of a radical nature. Residents of every state in the U.S. live under the same federal government, and we all live under the same laws and regulation. It's silly to prevent residents of one state from working in another state until that person goes through an entire training process and paid application fees already completed and paid elsewhere.

Ohio has already entered into occupational-licensing reciprocity agreements with several other states, and Gov. DeWine has signed legislation helping military spouses get back to work after a transfer, by removing needless barriers to employment. This bill is only the next logical extension of steps already taken by the state to promote the dignity of work and the ability of residents to care for themselves.

As this committee brainstorms ways to boost the collective prosperity of Ohioans, the best starting point is to remove government barriers to entry that pretend to take care of them but serve only to waste their time and effort.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.