

House State and Local Government Committee

1/29/2020

Lori Kershner

on behalf of

Opportunity Solutions Project

Chairman Wiggam, Ranking Member Kelly and Committee Members,

My name is Lori Kershner, and I am here on behalf of my client, Opportunity Solutions Project. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 432 (HB 432.)

This bill will help credentialed workers find meaningful employment by ensuring the occupational licensing process accounts for the work experience of qualified, practicing professionals when they move to Ohio. This bill will make it easier for tradespeople from all types of industries—like nurses, EMTs, and electricians—to move here, find work, pay taxes, and integrate into their communities.

Just in the past couple of years, Ohio has made strides in improving its occupational licensing laws by implementing sunrise and sunset reviews. HB 432 would continue Ohio's record of work-friendly reform, accomplishing three things: streamlining the licensing process for skilled workers; creating opportunity for those workers; and helping to fill job openings.

First, if someone has been safely practicing their occupation in another state, they can continue their profession in Ohio. This is not automatic. The bill contains prudent safeguards. Incoming workers must establish residency, pass any required background checks, be in good standing, have had a license for at least a year or have been in the occupation for two to three years. Their license cannot be suspended or have been revoked, and they cannot be involved in any ongoing complaints, or have a disqualifying criminal history. They must have passed any requisite examinations in their departing state and pay all applicable fees in Ohio.

It is up to the licensing authority to determine if the license from another state is at the same level of practice and to grant what they deem the equivalent license in Ohio.

By recognizing their current license, and safe and successful work history, it will create more opportunities for people making their home here in Ohio. Research shows that workers in occupations that require licenses are less likely to move between states.ⁱ This blocks them from fundamental parts of the American Dream, including changing jobs to increase incomes and moving to new places for better opportunities. With this legislation, workers can move to Ohio to start a new career opportunity—or for whatever reason when life happens. The fear of losing one's livelihood will no longer be an obstacle.

Lastly, this bill will help fill many of the much-needed job openings in your state. There are a record number of job opening across the country, including hundreds of thousands (276,000 according to Bureau of Labor and Statistics) of current job openings in Ohio. This bill would not take job opportunities away from Ohioans currently living here, as the workforce shortage that Ohio is facing leaves many spots open for prospective workers. Many of those occupations require a license that skilled workers could fill, but-for the current processes holding them back.

HB 432 will allow qualified professionals, who may otherwise stay put in another state, move to Ohio to continue working with less delay.

Republican Governor Ducey of Arizona and Democratic Governor Wolf of Pennsylvania have already signaled they are “Open for Business” by streamlining their licensing process for incoming workers. Ohio could and should be next to offer more opportunities for qualified workers.

I’m happy to take any questions you might have. Thank you.

ⁱ Johnson, Janna and Kleiner, Morris M., Is Occupational Licensing a Barrier to Interstate Migration? (December 2017).