



**SENATE GENERAL GOVERNMENT & AGENCY REVIEW COMMITTEE
INTERESTED PARTY TESTIMONY ON S.B. 246**

Submitted in Writing on February 19, 2020 by

Andrea Ashley, Vice President of Government Relations, Associated General Contractors of Ohio

Chair Schuring, Vice Chair Rulli, Ranking Member O'Brien and Senators on the General Government & Agency Review Committee:

The Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Ohio is a construction association that represents large and small, union and open shop (non-union), commercial building and industrial contractors from across the state. Our members construct hospitals, offices, schools, wastewater treatment plants, warehouses and manufacturing facilities, and a host of other vertical structures.

S.B. 246 would establish a comprehensive “reciprocity” process to provide Ohio licenses to out-of-state licensees, **with the goal of encouraging economic growth and helping Ohio businesses gain qualified workers. Our association has concerns that the bill may have the opposite impact on the construction industry**, as well as increase uncertainty and risk for businesses and consumers.

AGC members subcontract or work closely with companies that employ licensed trade professionals, professional engineers and professional surveyors; some also directly employ licensed professionals. **When companies hire or work with a licensed professional under current law, they know that the individual has a certain level of education, experience and training. That would no longer be the case if S.B. 246 was enacted.**

Under the bill, individuals holding an out-of-state license can receive an Ohio license even if they do not have the same level of education and experience that is required under the Ohio’s licensing codes. **This creates ambiguity and increased risks for customers and employers when dealing with licensed professionals. And, watered-down qualifications can be detrimental in an industry like construction** where safety is paramount to those working on a project, and the integrity of a structure and its systems is vital to the welfare of the people using it.

We have repeatedly been told that S.B. 246 deals with licensing reciprocity, yet nowhere in the bill is there a reciprocal arrangement where another state must recognize Ohio licenses in return for Ohio recognizing theirs. **Currently, the Ohio Construction Industry Licensing Board has reciprocal agreements with other states** where the licensing qualifications are comparable, and the other states provide the same considerations for licensed Ohioans. **Additionally, Professional Engineers and Professional Surveyors already provide license reciprocity under their National Model Law.**

S.B. 246 undermines these true reciprocal arrangements. If passed, the legislation will ultimately put Ohio employers and licensed professionals at a competitive disadvantage to those



in other states with lesser licensing standards. It could push some Ohio companies and individuals out of the state, and ultimately have a damaging impact on the construction industry and our efforts to recruit qualified professionals.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on S.B. 246 and its potential impact on the construction industry. We hope the sponsors and senators on this committee consider the industry's concerns as they further deliberate this piece of legislation.