



OLBC President Rep. Thomas West

Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 105

Chair Edwards, Vice Chair Powell, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the House Economic and Workforce Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony on behalf of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC) on Senate Bill (SB) 105, which would establish local and state government reciprocity in the certification process for state-certified Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs), Women-Owned Business Enterprises (WBEs), and veteran-friendly businesses. By establishing reciprocity, this commonsense bill will streamline the certification process for these businesses and eliminate redundancy so that these individuals only need to go through the certification process once.

This simple change in the law will cut down on the hoops these businesses have to jump through to get certified and apply for contracts. Anything we, as legislators, can do to ease the burden on these historically disadvantaged

businesses is worth doing. OLBC is committed to growing opportunities for Black-owned businesses and other minority-owned businesses, as well as women-owned and veteran-owned businesses. We are proud of the work Sen. Vernon Sykes is doing on this issue on behalf of OLBC, alongside Sen. Kirk Schuring.

We know that when minority-owned businesses thrive, our communities thrive as a whole. I have seen that firsthand in my community with the Stark County Minority Business Association. With support from the Department of Development, the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce, and area corporate leaders, the SCMBA has experienced tremendous growth over the past few years despite the challenges the pandemic has posed. That has paid dividends for Stark County as a whole, and I know the same is true of communities represented by OLBC members across the state.

It is really encouraging to see such a broad statewide coalition of business and advocacy organizations lining up behind this important legislation. OLBC looks forward to the positive impact SB 105 will have in terms of allowing these businesses more opportunities to thrive, and we appreciate the opportunity to offer our strong support.