

HOUSE BILL 203 TESTIMONY

Good morning, Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairman John, and House members of the State and Local Government Committee. Thank you for this opportunity for having me testify before you today.

My name is Jason M. Jones, Licensed Public Accountant in the states of Delaware, Iowa and Montana, and I am currently a Principal at a CPA firm called HWA Alliance of CPA Firms. I am here to testify as an interested party to House Bill 203, which would allow universal licensing reciprocity in Ohio, something I have waited a number of years for Ohio to legislate, given my current out of state professional licensing status. I would also like to thank Representative Powell for making this bill possible, I owe both of them a debt of gratitude.

I wish I could testify before you today as a proponent of this bill, however there is one small problem I have with the bill: it explicitly excludes my particular class of licensure: the Public Accountant designation. In the bill itself as introduced, on page 398, lines 11596 and 11597, the bill's proposed language specifically reads: **Chapter 4796 of the Revised Code does not apply to public accountant registrations issued under this section.** I am taken aback at the refusal to recognize this particular class of license, especially considering that it meets all other requirements for reciprocity and that it runs counter to the intent of this bill as presented by the bill's sponsors.

Representative Powell's HB 203 is a commonly-used recognition bill. Pennsylvania and Arizona enacted similar bills last year. In Missouri, the legislature passed HB 2046 that is nearly identical to SB 246 and was signed into law by Governor Parson on July 6th of last year.

Uniquely, however, HB 203 singles out "registered public accountants" and denies them interstate recognition in Ohio. The bills in those three other states do not single out registered public accountants for different treatment.

Said differently, a bill in Ohio that is 771 pages goes out of its way to exclude recognition of one and only one type of licensee--registered public accountants. That different treatment cannot be justified by concerns about consumer protection because (a) there are only 6 practicing registered public accountants in Ohio, (b) there are roughly 200 practicing public accountants that have been licensed by other states and (c) Ohio lets those out-of-state PAs serve customers in Ohio on an incidental basis as long as the registered public accountant does not reside in Ohio, pursuant to Section 4701.15 of the Ohio Revised Code.

In light of these facts, and the fact that given the small numbers of this license class and the fact that this out-of-state license class clearly does not post any risk to health and safety any more than any other licensing designation, I respectfully ask that you consider either of the two friendly amendments.

- The first one is a simple deletion of the unique exclusion of recognition for registered public accountants (lines 11596 and 11597 of the bill); and
- The second one intends to create a window of only one year for registered public accountants to have Ohio recognize their licenses from other states.

I think that either of these amendments would be reasonable and equitable given the circumstances.

Thank you for your time and thank you for listening. I await any questions you may have for me.

Jason M. Jones, LPA (DE, IA, MT)