

H.B. No. 107; 3rd. hearing May 17, 2022

General Government Budget Committee

To: Members of the General Government Budget Committee

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to proposed House Bill 107.

My name is Mike Simko, owner and president of Access Solutions, Inc., We are a well-respected accessibility / lift company located in Akron, serving all of northeast Ohio for 25 years. We sell, install and service stairlifts, vertical platform lifts, ramps and residential elevators in over 40 counties.

I oppose the proposed legislation as currently written.

Our main opposition is the inclusion of vertical platform lifts in the current draft of the Bill.

First, I need to explain that our industry (Vertical platform lift (a.k.a. “wheelchair lifts”), stairlifts and incline lifts typically considered an “industry within an industry”. Whereas we do not have anything to do with commercial elevators, since we do provide vertical lifts and stairlifts, we are associated with the elevator industry insomuch as the safety code our equipment falls under (A18.1) is a sub section of the national elevator safety code of A17.1.

To that end, the current language of the proposed Bill would roll us into training and licensing requirements focused on commercial elevators because of one type of equipment currently written into the Bill: Vertical Platform Lifts.

Vertical Platform Lifts, when installed in a non-residential building are already regulated under A18.1 (national Safety Code for Stairlifts, Vertical Lifts and Incline Lifts). Compliance with this code is overseen by the state Elevator Division via the current permitting and inspection process. Additionally, this equipment is restricted in terms of lifting heights, and floors served. The operating systems are also quite different from commercial elevators. In terms of public safety, this equipment should not be lumped in with statistics of commercial elevators.

To that end, it seems to reason that vertical platform lifts should be removed from the language of the bill. Stairlifts have already been removed, which qualify for the same argument.

Any licensing requirements should apply to commercial elevators only, should the bill move forward.

To that, I submit:

- 1) The proposed licensing requirements and criteria would be burdensome for all of the small businesses (as most accessibility companies are) and also be “overkill”, since accessibility lifts are a different animal vs. commercial elevators.
- 2) Vertical lifts in commercial locations are already regulated under A18.1 requiring permits, acceptance inspections and annual inspections verifying compliance to the safety standard.
- 3) The proposed licensing process would result in a financial burden for accessibility companies (almost all of which are locally owned small businesses with 5 – 20 employees).
- 4) With respect to vertical platform lifts, the proposed licensing criteria (operation, installation and repair of commercial elevator systems) would not apply to vertical lifts.

In conclusion, I respectfully implore the committee to seriously consider the practical, common-sense concerns presented and not vote in favor of the Bill as currently written.

Regards,

Mike Simko
Access Solutions, Inc.