



**Proponent Testimony from Brent Phelan JD, CPCU, CIC, CRM, CSRSM on Senate Bill 64
Before the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
October 6, 2021**

Chairwoman Roegner, Vice Chairman McColley and Ranking Member Craig, my name is Brent Phelan, JD, CPCU, CIC, CRM, CSRSM and I own an independent insurance agency, Phelan Insurance, which has locations in Versailles and West Chester.

In addition to owning the agency, I am also the Vice Chairman for the Ohio Insurance Agents Association (OIA). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 64 on behalf of OIA.

OIA is the collective voice of 1,200 independent agencies that employ nearly 11,000 Ohioans. We promote, progress and protect the profession and the guidance only independent insurance agents provide. Independent insurance agents are trusted advisors to Ohio citizens and businesses and are responsible for servicing 85% of the commercial policies and 42% of the personal policies in the state. Independent agents offer many types of insurance – auto, health, home, life and business insurance – from many different companies to match consumers with the best choices for their particular needs. We help agents by providing agency valuation support, succession planning, advocacy initiatives, professional development, business solutions and industry thought leadership. We are committed to fighting the commoditization of insurance because we believe the right insurance matters.

OIA supports Senate Bill 64 sponsored by Senators Jay Hottinger (R-Newark) and George Lang (R-West Chester) to enact commonsense consumer protections that will safeguard Ohioans from unscrupulous residential roofing contractors. Notably, numerous states have laws in place (including several of our neighboring states) to regulate roofing contractors.

S.B. 64 takes a balanced approach that establishes essential consumer protections without hindering legitimate businesses. The intent of the legislation is to protect consumers from “storm scammers” who often fail to complete work and deceive consumers about their need for unnecessary repairs when they are highly vulnerable following severe weather events. A typical storm scammer employs several crews to perform a large volume of repairs in a short period of time. When the storm scammers leave the area, customers are frequently left with shoddy repairs that will require further work, creating an additional financial hardship.

S.B. 64 will establish much needed industry standards such as requiring roofing contractors to provide a written contract, including a cancellation provision. The contract shall provide the consumer the right to rescind the contract, within 3 business days of signing, for any reason, including if the consumer receives written notification that all or any part of the claim is not covered under the insurance policy. This “cooling off” period helps protect consumers from unethical contractors.

Additionally, roofing contracts will be prohibited from acting as adjusters for insurance claims on behalf of consumers as this is a conflict of interest.

For these reasons, we support S.B. 64. Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important legislation. I am happy to answer any questions.