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Proponent Testimony
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Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Ohio Hospital Association in support of Senate Bill 6, which would enter Ohio into the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact.

Established in 1915, OHA is the nation's first state-level hospital association. OHA exists to collaborate with member hospitals and health systems to ensure a healthy Ohio. OHA currently represents 240 hospitals and 14 health systems throughout Ohio. In 2020, our membership included 189 acute care hospitals, 23 long-term acute care facilities, 28 psychiatric, rehabilitation, and specialty surgical hospitals, and 10 children's hospitals. The association is governed by a 20-member Board of Trustees with representation from small and large hospitals, teaching facilities and health care systems with a committee and task force structure.

The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact is an agreement among participating states to work together to streamline the licensing process for physicians who want to practice in multiple states or move across state lines. It offers a voluntary, expedited pathway to licensure for physicians who qualify.

The mission of the Compact is one shared by OHA—increased access to health care. The Compact makes it possible to extend the reach of physicians, improve access to medical specialists and leverage the use of medical technologies, such as telemedicine. While making it easier for physicians to obtain licenses to practice in multiple states, the Compact also enhances the ability of states to share investigative and disciplinary information.

OHA believes that participation in the Compact would positively impact patients, physicians and hospitals alike. Ohio hospitals would gain an added ability to provide timely care to the communities they serve through participation in the Compact, which is particularly important given the many unique and complex challenges faced by hospitals across the state.

Ongoing preparedness has long been a priority of Ohio hospitals. The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the Compact's necessity. As we address the reality of increased hospital capacity and continued stress on staff and other resources, passage of SB 6 would be a crucial tool in addressing these very difficult situations while providing safe staffing. If Ohio were a member of the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, we would be able to supplement our current workforce with other licensed, qualified and competent physicians.

These positive impacts would be achieved while also reducing the administrative burden for Ohio's physicians and retaining the authority of the Ohio State Medical Board to regulate the practice of medicine within Ohio's borders.

We appreciate the efforts to bring Ohio in line with its neighboring states in becoming a member of the Compact. Thank you for your time and consideration of OHA's support for SB 6.