

Senator Vernon Sykes
Senate District 28



Senator Kirk Schuring
Senate District 29

Senate Bill 105, Sponsor Testimony
Senate Small Business and Economic Development Committee
March 17, 2021

Chairman Rulli, Vice-Chairman Lang, and members of the Senate Small Business and Economic Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 105.

This minority business enterprise, or MBE, reciprocity legislation was originally proposed by the Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce and promoted by the Secretary of State's office as a way to remove barriers for minority-owned businesses. The state of Ohio's MBE program was designed to assist minority and other historically economically disadvantaged businesses compete for and obtain public contracts. Local governments throughout the state frequently have similar programs. Currently, MBEs competing for public contracts in Ohio are often required to receive additional MBE certifications from various local governments on top of their state certification if they are applying for local government contracts.

This bill would allow MBEs to rely on their state MBE certification in order to be eligible to participate in local MBE programs. It would also allow MBEs to utilize their certification from the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) for local government certifications throughout the state. This would greatly simplify the local MBE certification process, saving time, paperwork and fees for minority-owned businesses. It would also allow MBEs to apply more easily for contracts around the state.

This legislation removes significant barriers for MBEs ultimately increasing their access to more opportunities. In doing so, Ohio makes doing business for MBEs more seamless and efficient, while improving our state's overall business climate for minority-owned businesses.

In addition, we have also received suggestions to include the Woman Business Enterprise (WBE) and Veteran Business Enterprise (VBE) programs in this bill.

Thank you again for allowing us to give sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 105. We would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.