



Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee
Chairman Michael Rulli
Proponent Testimony on SB 105

Ohio Women's Coalition
Rachel Winder, Executive Director
March 24, 2021

Chairman Rulli, Vice-Chair Lang, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee,

My name is Rachel Winder and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Women's Coalition (OWC) which is a new, statewide organization of women-supporting organizations and women business owners advocating for women's economic growth in the state.

I am providing testimony today on behalf of the OWC in support of SB 105, sponsored by Senator Sykes and Senator Schuring, which would simplify the certification process for Minority Business Enterprises across Ohio.

It is our understanding that an amendment will be offered to SB 105 which, if adopted, will include the women's business enterprise certification program. The OWC would like to offer our strong support of including WBE's in SB 105.

The bill, as amended, would allow certification that is obtained from the state to be recognized by local governments across Ohio to eliminate or reduce the need to prove you are a minority business or a women-owned business multiple times to compete for contracts across the state.

Unfortunately, the process for certification is burdensome and time-consuming. Although we recognize and appreciate the need to be thorough to prevent fraud within these programs, our members have had to go through the certification process in multiple venues to prove that they are women-owned over and over again.

Women receive just a fraction of government contracts. The WBE program was created a few years ago to solve a specific problem in other states that require certification in Ohio, but the Ohio program does not come with goals for agencies to increase contracting to women. There is no incentive to contract with WBE's in Ohio, and the numbers show that it simply isn't happening. We would also ask the committee to consider including goals for the Ohio WBE program.

We appreciate Senator Sykes and Senator Schuring introducing this important legislation that is truly a good government program to help mostly small businesses reduce unnecessary

administrative work and cost and we are hopeful that the committee will have a chance to include WBE's in this important bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. We urge a favorable vote on AMENDED SB 105.