

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM
PLEASE COMPLETE THE WITNESS INFORMATION FORM BEFORE TESTIFYING

DATE: **May 11, 2021**

NAME: **Thomas Pannett**

ORGANIZATION: (IF APPLICABLE)

POSITION/TITLE: **Attorney**

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ARE YOU REPRESENTING: YOURSELF ORGANIZATION

DO YOU WISH TO TESTIFY ON:

LEGISLATION (BILL NUMBER): **Senate Bill 105**

SPECIFIC ISSUE:

SUBJECT MATTER:

DO YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE THE ENACTMENT OF LEGISLATION REGARDING THE ISSUE?

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE GROUNDS ON WHICH YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE SUCH ENACTMENT:

I am in favor of SB105 because it will make doing business in Ohio easier for minority owned businesses but I am also in favor of an amendment adding other cross certification opportunities for other businesses certified in Ohio like women and veteran owned.

WILL YOU HAVE A WRITTEN STATEMENT, VISUAL AIDS, OR OTHER MATERIALS TO DISTRIBUTE?
YES NO

(IF YES, PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES TO THE CHAIRMAN OR SECRETARY)

HOW MUCH TIME WILL YOUR TESTIMONY REQUIRE?

Win-Win-Win: A chance for ALL in the certified business community.

Chairman Rulli, Vice-Chair Lang, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit this correspondence as proponent testimony for Senate Bill 105.

Ohio Senate Bill 105 is a true enhancement to creating efficiencies in government and will allow these businesses to save time, money, and the frustration that goes along with obtaining government certifications and contracts in differing jurisdictions.

My name is Tom Pannett, recently retired of ODOT and working for a large law firm in Columbus. I have worked with state and local government for some time and in several many capacities. Part of my duties and pleasure while in government was helping small, women, veteran and minority owned businesses succeed. I have engaged persons in the industry regarding this legislation such as my friends Joyce Johnson, Owner of CCI Engineering Services, DBE, WBE, EDGE Certified and John Wooldridge, Owner of Excenture Business Solutions, MBE, EDGE, DBE Certified. They assisted me in drafting this testimony.

We believe that while it is beyond time for a law like SB105 to be enacted, an opportunity is being missed. Just as it is frustrating for an MBE to have to be recertified in multiple jurisdictions like Cleveland or Cincinnati after already being certified by the Ohio Department of Administrative Services, it is equally as frustrating for ALL certified businesses. Currently the state recognizes business certifications as a Small Business Enterprise (SBE), Woman Business Enterprise (WBE), Veteran-Friendly Business Enterprise (VFBE), and a business certified in the Encouraging Diversity Growth and Equity (EDGE) program. There are also federal certifications such the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program implemented by Ohio government agencies. And, many of the business that are certified in one area are also often certified in others; e.g., EDGE, DBE and MBE or WBE and MBE, etc.

It is no less frustrating and time consuming for a WBE to seek certifications in multiple jurisdictions as an MBE. Bear in mind that entities certified in one area are often not able to take advantage of contracting opportunities or work for government in other areas. In other words, an MBE certification primarily allows minority owned businesses to compete in procurement opportunities; and the competition between those companies is often robust. But, that certification provides no opportunities in federal government contracts as does a DBE certification. Nor does an MBE certification allow participating in a construction contract set-aside for an SBE. Thus, while there is some limited cross-competition, the entities that are certified in the state largely do not compete head-to-head with each other's opportunities, but they all need these certifications to grow their businesses and have potential to improve the communities in which they work.

For these reasons, we urge the Ohio General Assembly to amend SB 105 and add all the other certifications that Ohio currently recognizes; or consider a companion bill that will help these other businesses. In that way, the community of certified business will not have to go to

jurisdiction after jurisdiction and get re-certified over and over. Just as the win-win is being crafted for the MBE community, a win-win-win can be created for all certified businesses in Ohio.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TP Pannett', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Thomas P. Pannett, P.E., Esq., MBA, CPPO^{ret}