



Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur

Chairman Wiggam, Ranking Member Kelly, esteemed members of the State and Local Government Committee,

As you remember, substitute HB 509 is the result of the lengthy review of 19 of Ohio's professional licensure boards last fall. In accordance with SB 255 of the 132nd General Assembly, this committee did a deep dive into each board's licensure requirements, fees, education and continuing education requirements. In total 225 licenses were reviewed. LSC prepared comparative information from surrounding states, we received third party testimony from the Buckeye Institute and the committee proposed a list of recommended licensure changes at the end of last year.

Substitute HB 509 continues this work to review professional licensure and ensure we are balancing consumer protections and quality standards with licensure best practices, competitive fees, and reasonable education requirements. Our goal in this legislation is to make Ohio the best place in the Union to live, work, and raise a family, we want to be business friendly, supportive of our licensed professional's career choices, and remove barriers to entering or continuing in any given field.

I appreciate Representative John's leadership in gathering information and coordinating meetings with interested parties and stakeholders. I would also like to thank our aides Michael and Lauren for their assistance in this process. Over the past two months, we met several times with the state directors for the Vision Board, the Psychology Board, and representatives of the Funeral Directors to ensure we understood their concerns and the potential impact of proposed changes. We made ourselves available to anyone who had questions about the committee proposed licensure changes and were able to resolve some of their concerns in the substitute bill.

As an example, the Funeral Directors were concerned about the committee's recommendation to add 1 year of Mortuary Sciences to every licensure requirement, it turns out this would significantly decrease the number of people able to enter the Funeral Directors field while increasing costs and not being relevant to the practical needs of the profession. We have modified this recommendation to only apply to embalmers as specified under the current requirements.

I would also like to particularly draw the committee's attention to page 56-57 of the bill, which will require continued the licensure boards to continue their analysis and a report to the legislature of the fee structure for each occupational license, whether their fees can be more competitively aligned with neighboring states, whether the fee structure is a financial burden, and if the licensure process can be improved with electronic licensure issuance.

I will now turn it over to Representative John to go over some of the specific licensure changes.