



Senate Bill 131

Ohio House of Representatives
State and Local Government Committee

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Chair Wiggam, Vice-Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Opportunity Solutions Project (OSP). OSP supports SB 131 because it will make it easier for people to find work and make Ohio their home.

With a slowdown in Ohio's population growth,¹ SB 131 is an opportunity to attract new residents and businesses to the state. SB 131 would streamline the licensing process for skilled workers by recognizing out-of-state licenses and work experience.

SB 131 uses Ohio's licensing reform for military families as a template, applying a similar policy.² Under SB 131, Ohio will issue an in-state license if a person has already earned a license from another state and held it for at least a year. This will keep Ohio competitive, as neighbors Pennsylvania and West Virginia have passed similar policies, along with states from other parts of the country like Utah, Idaho, Mississippi, and Missouri.

While more than 1,000 occupations require a license to work in at least one state, fewer than 60 occupations are licensed in every state.³ This means that some workers may have real-world experience in a state that does not require a license, while Ohio does. SB 131 accounts for this by allowing a person to obtain an Ohio license based on out-of-state work experience. Among others, states like Iowa and Kansas have adopted this policy.

While SB 131 removes regulatory barriers to work, it also includes safeguards. In order to obtain a license under SB 131, all applicants must clear background checks, be in good standing with regulatory boards, and have the requisite years of work experience.

SB 131 is a tested policy to help enhance Ohio's workforce and grow its economy.⁴ Americans are fleeing highly regulated states.⁵ And research confirms that licensed workers are less likely to move to a new state when burdened by state-level restrictions.⁶ OSP supports SB 131 because it will help Ohio compete for skilled workers by removing extra hurdles to employment.

¹ Pew, "Fiscal 50: State trends and analysis" (2022), <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/data-visualizations/2014/fiscal-50#ind10>.

² SB 7, The Ohio Legislature (133rd General Assembly), https://search-prod.lis.state.oh.us/solarapi/v1/general_assembly_133/bills/sb7/EN/06?format=pdf.

³ Jared Meyer & Victoria Eardley, "Dispelling three big myths about occupational licensing," Foundation for Government Accountability (2018), <https://thefga.org/one-pagers/dispelling-three-big-myths-about-occupational-licensing/>.

⁴ Greg George, "Workforce pains: How states can grow their skilled workforce through universal licensing recognition," Foundation for Government Accountability (2020), <https://thefga.org/paper/universal-licensing-recognition/>.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, "State-to-state migration flows: 2019," U.S. Census Bureau (2020), <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/geographic-mobility/state-to-state-migration.html>.

⁶ Janna Johnson & Morris M. Kleiner, "Is occupational licensing a barrier to interstate migration?" National Bureau of Economic Research (2017), <https://www.nber.org/papers/w24107>.