



Proponent Testimony before the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

On behalf of the Ohio Auctioneers Association

in support of House Bill 321 – Updates to Ohio’s Auctioneer Law

February 15, 2022

By: Wade Baer, Ohio Auctioneers Association

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Chairman Shaffer, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, my name is Wade Baer. I have made my living as a full-time, licensed auctioneer for 19 years and am the owner of Baer Auctioneers Realty, LLC. in Columbiana County. I am here today to provide testimony in support of HB 321 regarding changes to ORC chapter 4707 the auctioneer law on behalf of the Ohio Auctioneers Association (OAA). I would like to thank Representatives Darrell Kick & Bob Young for their support and work on behalf of this important bill. I would also like to thank the Ohio Department of Agriculture and Ohio Auctioneer’s Commission for their help and collaboration.

There are approximately 2900 licensees currently in the state. The OAA has 390 members in Ohio mostly small business owners and is a non-profit organization, founded in 1942. Since that time, it has continued to grow in strength and fellowship and is an association committed to improving and promoting higher standards in the auction profession.

This bill is one that was drafted with two goals in mind. The first goal is to relieve the barrier to entry into our industry. HB 321 will accomplish this goal by removing the apprenticeship program. With the changes proposed in this bill, to be a licensed auctioneer a person will need the currently required 80 hours of classroom education from an approved provider and then sit for the auction

exam. After passing the exam they will be a fully licensed auctioneer, a process that from start to finish could take as little as two months to complete as compared to the current method which is a 14-month time frame at best. This portion of the bill was prepared within the spirit of SB 255 (from the 132 GA) to reduce barriers to obtaining occupational licenses.

The second goal is to cover online auctions under auction law to bring another layer of protection to consumers by educating these individuals on basic auction business practices, ethics, law, contracts and trust accounts.

To address some concerns that were expressed during the sponsor testimony in this committee I will speak more on the removal of the apprenticeship program and how that decision was made. We started this bill with the goal of making the law governing auctioneers match the current landscape of the auction industry. Online auctions, which are becoming more prevalent, were the main focus. We then saw the need to change the apprenticeship as it would not serve those who wanted to become online auctioneers and would eliminate auctioneers as sponsors who are solely running auctions online because of the “12 live auction” requirement. In doing so we were working in conjunction with the Ohio Department of Agriculture and we came to find out about the struggles of new auctioneers, specifically women and minorities, to find sponsors. We soon came to the conclusion that a complete removal was the obvious solution. For those that have concerns that this will leave a gap in the training process, the Ohio Auctioneers Association has a plan. Efforts are currently being led by OAA President Karen Huelsman create a voluntary mentorship program through the association which will allow new auctioneers access to mentors. I will let Karen elaborate in her testimony on the specifics.

A few changes have also been agreed upon by the Ohio Auctioneers Association and the Ohio Department of Agriculture, include the proposed addition of a continuing education requirement for auctioneers, removing the special auctioneer license, adding definitions of live and online auctions, removing the oral exam, changing the auction firm license to a biennial renewal and a change in the handling of the auctioneer fund.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony on this important bill. We urge your favorable support. I am happy to answer any questions at this time.