

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 321

By Geralyn M. Miller, Ph.D.

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Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on behalf of House Bill 321 which, among other measures designed to update the law governing the licensure requirements for auctioneers, would eliminate the requirement for a year- long apprenticeship prior to the issuance of an auctioneer license.

My name is Geralyn Miller and I am a Professor Emeritas in the Doermer School of Business at Purdue University Fort Wayne as well as a licensed auctioneer in the State of Indiana. I am late to the auction business having graduated from the Reppert School in Indiana, an Ohio approved auction school this past summer. I successfully took the Indiana auctioneer's exam and became licensed in that state in October. Immediately after attending Reppert, I moved to Delaware, Ohio to be closer to the business that I have owned and operated for many years in Marysville, 5th Street Pawn LLC. When I retired from Purdue last year, I intended to begin conducting online auctions in a companion company to the pawn business to enhance profitability and create additional jobs.

Having been twice widowed, I also want to be able to help other women who, like myself, might find themselves in need of downsizing their households to navigate the frightening waters into which they are suddenly plunged. I understand from experience exactly what they are going through. I cannot do either of these things in Ohio without first serving an apprenticeship. However, there is a problem in doing so.

Current times have changed the contours of our industries across the country. The auction experience is no exception. During the past several years, online auctions have proliferated in response to the COVID mandates. Many auction insiders believe, as do I, that online auctions are here to stay. The auction law as it is currently written calls for apprentices to participate as bid callers in at least twelve auction sales. In order to do this, there must be twelve live auction sales at a time when those sales are diminished in numbers. This apprenticeship requirement is effectively a barrier to entry and is occurring in a time when an auctioneer who wishes to conduct online auctions only may never need to call bids in order to auction consigned goods.

In view of this, I respectfully request that you give House Bill 321 the green light so that I and others like me can engage in the practice of today's auctioneering without having to adhere to requirements that will never impact our ability to successfully perform our jobs.