

**Senate Bill 105 Written Proponent Testimony
Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee**

Chairman Rulli, Vice Chair Lang, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 105. I'm Katie Eagan, Vice President of Government Affairs at the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber.

The Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber represents nearly 4,000 businesses across Southwest Ohio, Southeast Indiana, and Northern Kentucky. Our work includes a commitment to grow and retain a 21st century workforce and stimulate economic development in our region with a vision for future growth. The Chamber is also home to the Minority Business Accelerator—a national leader in accelerating the development of sizeable minority businesses and strengthening the regional minority entrepreneurial community.

Senate Bill 105 will enable greater opportunity for MBEs and have positive long-term impacts on their ability to do business. The legislation stands to support the economic vitality of minority communities across Ohio. This progress is tied to the broader economic vitality of our region, and the state as a whole.

Improving the business climate for MBEs in our state is vitally important. Currently, MBEs competing for public contracts in Ohio are often required to receive additional MBE certifications from various local governments on top of their state certification when seeking local business opportunities. We have heard from many members about the administrative burdens associated with applying for and maintaining similar certifications across multiple political subdivisions and we believe Senate Bill 105 to be a remedy.

Top-down reciprocity for state-certified MBEs would simplify the experience of minority entrepreneurs seeking local business opportunities and make doing business for MBEs more efficient. Through easing the administrative burdens often experienced by minority entrepreneurs who apply for and maintain multiple certifications, Senate Bill 105 cuts some of the red tape associated with accessing various business opportunities designed to increase minority participation and representation.

We appreciate the willingness of the bill sponsors to work collaboratively with the business community in drafting this legislation and working to alleviate some of the burdens facing MBEs. We look forward to continuing the conversation on how we can best support minority-, women- and veteran-owned businesses across Ohio.

Please reach out to me at 513.579.3120 or keagan@cincinnati-chamber.com if you have any questions. Thank you for your continued commitment to the success of our region and our state.