

## 99th House District

Ashtabula County

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## Committees

Agriculture and Conservation  
Armed Services and Veterans  
Affairs  
Primary and Secondary Education  
State and Local Government

## Sarah Fowler Arthur State Representative

Chairman Johnson, Vice-Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Ohio Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to bring HB 509 before you today.

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 132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, the House State & Local Government 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.

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.

As we learned more about each board's responsibilities and challenged them to think proactively about ways to improve accessibility to our future workforce, we included a provision in the bill which will require the licensure boards to continue their analysis's and make 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 to those seeking licensure or renewal, and if the licensure process can be improved with electronic licensure issuance.

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, especially Michael, for their assistance in this process. Over the past five 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 many of their concerns in the substitute bill, which subsequently passed the house and is before you today. We are available to assist this committee in finalizing a bill that will make commonsense updates to Ohio's occupational licensure requirements.

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