



**House Bill 509 – Written Interested Party Testimony
Thomas Stuber, Ohio Alliance of Recovery Providers
Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee
November 30, 2022**

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Martin, and members of the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 509 and the Occupational License Review Report. My name is Thomas Stuber and I am the President of the Ohio Alliance of Recovery Providers (OARP), an organization representing more than 40 of the largest addiction treatment and prevention agencies throughout Ohio.

On behalf of OARP, I would like to thank the committee for your diligent, time-consuming work cleaning up Ohio's licensing requirements. We are especially grateful that the HB 509 substitute bill leaves the gambling disorder endorsement unchanged in current law. LCDC II, LCDC III, LICDC or LICDC-CS license holders who choose to apply for the gambling disorder endorsement do so because they have not been trained previously in this area. It was originally created after voter approval of the casino gaming constitutional amendment. With sports betting going live in January, we stand ready to treat those who need help.

One change in the substitute bill that concerns us is the elimination of a two-year grace period for certain lapsed licenses (LCDC II, LCDC III, LICDC, CDCA, AND LICDC-CS). Addiction treatment is difficult, grueling, round-the-clock work, and it is not meant for everyone. But for those who retire or leave the field, we want to leave the door open for them if they decide to return. We are in the midst of a serious workforce crisis. Most providers cannot meet the demand for services in their territories. I asked the Chemical Dependency Professionals Board how often this grace period had been used recently. In fiscal year 2022, 266 certificate or license holders utilized the grace period and renewed a certificate or license that was in lapsed status. In the first quarter of fiscal year 2023 alone, 85 certificate or license holders have utilized the grace period.

We humbly suggest that instead of removing the grace period completely, a good compromise would be to reduce it to a one-year grace period. This is one of several avenues that could help alleviate our workforce challenges.

Another solution to the workforce crisis would be amending Representative Manning's HB 452 into HB 509. In the spirit of streamlining Ohio's licensing, HB 452 seeks to remove much of the red tape currently experienced by the Chemical Dependency Professionals Board. Representative Manning worked with the Board and many advocates on this bill, including OARP. *If HB 452 comes before you as an amendment, I want you to know that we wholeheartedly endorse its adoption and that it would be tremendously helpful for providers.*

Thank you again for taking the time to consider these suggestions. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

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