



**Proponent Testimony of Andrew W. Herf, Executive Director
Ohio Bar Owners Association
on HB 504
before the Ohio House Civil Justice Committee
May 21, 2024**

Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacson and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 504 today.

My name is Andy Herf and I serve as the Executive Director of the Ohio Bar Owners Association. We are a trade association representing the interests of the thousands of bar owners in the state who operate their businesses in a responsible manner. Our members strive to run their businesses in a responsible manner and server training is important element. For decades, the OBOA has offered Techniques of Alcohol Management (TAM) classes to members. TAM teaches bar owners, managers, bartenders and wait staff important information regarding Ohio's laws and techniques to serve alcohol responsibly.

Some of the more important lessons include when and how to cut off alcohol service to a patron, how to de-escalate emotionally charged situations to protect customers and some of the key laws in Ohio such as the need to check identification at the point of sale regardless of whether the identification was checked at the door. At the end of every TAM class, the participants are given a short survey to fill out. The participants, even those who have bartended for decades, overwhelmingly state that they learned information that they did not know, and that they would encourage other to take the course. Our goal with TAM is to train bartenders how to avoid problems and to watch out for their customers.

House Bill 504 would encourage more business owners and their employees to participate in server training programs. More training will in turn lead to safer environments in bars and other establishments. All businesses that sell alcohol to the public—on-premise and off-premise—strive toward that end. HB 504 simply provides another incentive to take public safety seriously. House Bill 504 seeks to mitigate risk, training key employees such as bartenders, wait staff and managers, and will help to eliminate situations that could lead to civil liability. The Ohio Bar Owners Association supports this additional incentive, and we urge your support of HB 504.

Thank you for your time today, I am happy to answer questions.