

**As Reported by the Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity  
Committee**

**135th General Assembly**

**Regular Session**

**2023-2024**

**S. B. No. 41**

**Senator Roegner**

---

**A BILL**

To amend sections 3781.19 and 3781.20 and to enact 1  
section 3781.21 of the Revised Code to make 2  
changes to the law relating to building 3  
inspections. 4

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF OHIO:**

**Section 1.** That sections 3781.19 and 3781.20 be amended 5  
and section 3781.21 of the Revised Code be enacted to read as 6  
follows: 7

**Sec. 3781.19.** There is hereby established in the 8  
department of commerce a board of building appeals consisting of 9  
five members who shall be appointed by the governor with the 10  
advice and consent of the senate. Terms of office shall be for 11  
four years, commencing on the fourteenth day of October and 12  
ending on the thirteenth day of October. Each member shall hold 13  
office from the date of appointment until the end of the term 14  
for which the member was appointed. Any member appointed to fill 15  
a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for 16  
which the member's predecessor was appointed shall hold office 17  
for the remainder of such term. Any member shall continue in 18  
office subsequent to the expiration date of the member's term 19

until a successor takes office, or until a period of sixty days 20  
has elapsed, whichever occurs first. One member shall be an 21  
attorney-at-law, admitted to the bar of this state and of the 22  
remaining members, one shall be a registered architect and one 23  
shall be a professional engineer, each of whom shall be duly 24  
licensed to practice their respective professions in this state, 25  
one shall be a fire prevention officer qualified under section 26  
3737.66 of the Revised Code, and one shall be a person with 27  
recognized ability in the plumbing or pipefitting profession. No 28  
member of the board of building standards shall be a member of 29  
the board of building appeals. Each member shall be paid an 30  
amount fixed pursuant to Chapter 124. of the Revised Code per 31  
diem. The department shall provide and assign to the board such 32  
employees as are required by the board to perform its functions. 33  
The board may adopt its own rules of procedure not inconsistent 34  
with sections 3781.06 to 3781.18 and 3791.04 of the Revised 35  
Code, and may change them in its discretion. The board may 36  
establish reasonable fees, based on actual costs for 37  
administration of filing and processing, not to exceed two 38  
hundred dollars, for the costs of filing and processing appeals. 39  
The board may establish additional fees for any expedited appeal 40  
subject to section 3781.21 of the Revised Code. A full and 41  
complete record of all proceedings of the board shall be kept 42  
and be open to public inspection. 43

In the enforcement by any department of the state or any 44  
political subdivision of this chapter and Chapter 3791., and 45  
sections 3737.41, 3737.42, 4104.02, 4104.06, 4104.43, 4104.44, 46  
4104.45, 4105.011, and 4105.11 of the Revised Code and any rule 47  
made thereunder, such department is the agency referred to in 48  
sections 119.07, 119.08, and 119.10 of the Revised Code. 49

The appropriate municipal or county board of appeals, 50

where one exists, certified pursuant to section 3781.20 of the Revised Code shall conduct the adjudication hearing referred to in sections 119.09 to 119.13 and required by section 3781.031 of the Revised Code. If there is no certified municipal or county board of appeals, the board of building appeals shall conduct the adjudication hearing. If the adjudication hearing concerns section 3781.111 of the Revised Code or any rule made thereunder, reasonable notice of the time, date, place, and subject of the hearing shall be given to any local corporation, association, or other organization composed of or representing persons with disabilities, as defined in section 3781.111 of the Revised Code, or if there is no local organization, then to any statewide corporation, association, or other organization composed of or representing persons with disabilities.

In addition to the provisions of Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, the municipal, county, or state board of building appeals, as the agency conducting the adjudication hearing, may reverse or modify the order of the enforcing agency if it finds that the order is contrary to this chapter and Chapters 3791. and 4104., and sections 3737.41, 3737.42, 4105.011, and 4105.11 of the Revised Code and any rule made thereunder or to a fair interpretation or application of such laws or any rule made thereunder, or that a variance from the provisions of such laws or any rule made thereunder, in the specific case, will not be contrary to the public interest where a literal enforcement of such provisions will result in unnecessary hardship.

The Except for expedited proceedings pursuant to section 3781.21 of the Revised Code, the state board of building appeals or a certified municipal or county board of appeals shall render its decision within thirty days after the date of the adjudication hearing. Following the adjudication hearing, any

municipal or county officer, official municipal or county board, 82  
or person who was a party to the hearing before the municipal or 83  
county board of appeals may apply to the state board of appeals 84  
for a de novo hearing before the state board, or may appeal 85  
directly to the court of common pleas pursuant to section 86  
3781.031 of the Revised Code. 87

In addition, any local corporation, association, or other 88  
organization composed of or representing persons with 89  
disabilities as defined in section 3781.111 of the Revised Code, 90  
or, if no local corporation, association, or organization 91  
exists, then any statewide corporation, association, or other 92  
organization composed of or representing persons with 93  
disabilities may apply for the de novo hearing or appeal to the 94  
court of common pleas from any decision of a certified municipal 95  
or county board of appeals interpreting, applying, or granting a 96  
variance from section 3781.111 of the Revised Code and any rule 97  
made thereunder. Application for a de novo hearing before the 98  
state board shall be made no later than thirty days after the 99  
municipal or county board renders its decision. 100

The state board of building appeals or the appropriate 101  
certified local board of building appeals shall grant variances 102  
and exemptions from the requirements of section 3781.108 of the 103  
Revised Code in accordance with rules adopted by the board of 104  
building standards pursuant to division (K) of section 3781.10 105  
of the Revised Code. 106

The state board of building appeals or the appropriate 107  
certified local board of building appeals shall, in granting a 108  
variance or exemption from section 3781.108 of the Revised Code, 109  
in addition to any other considerations the state or the 110  
appropriate local board determines appropriate, consider the 111

architectural and historical significance of the building. 112

**Sec. 3781.20.** (A) The board of building standards may 113  
certify municipal and county boards of building appeals to hear 114  
and decide appeals from adjudication orders pertaining to the 115  
enforcement of this chapter and Chapter 3791. of the Revised 116  
Code and any rules adopted pursuant thereto. Any board of 117  
appeals that has been certified by the board of building 118  
standards may contract with any municipal corporation or county 119  
certified to enforce this chapter and Chapter 3791. of the 120  
Revised Code to provide for appeals from adjudication orders 121  
arising from the certified municipal corporation or county. 122

(B) A certified local board of building appeals has 123  
exclusive jurisdiction to hear and decide all adjudication 124  
hearings arising from rulings of the local chief enforcement 125  
official concerning the provisions of this chapter and Chapter 126  
3791. of the Revised Code and any rules adopted pursuant 127  
thereto. The local board may establish reasonable fees, based on 128  
actual costs for administration of filing and processing, not to 129  
exceed one hundred dollars, for the costs of filing and 130  
processing appeals~~and~~. The board may charge any additional 131  
fees for expedited proceeding subject to section 3781.21 of the 132  
Revised Code. The board shall keep a full and complete record of 133  
all of its proceedings, and these records shall be open to 134  
public inspection. 135

(C) The local board of building appeals shall consist of 136  
five members, except that a municipal board may consist of more 137  
than five members if so provided by the charter of the municipal 138  
corporation, or any amendment to the charter, adopted prior to 139  
October 13, 1983. One member shall be an attorney at law 140  
admitted to the bar of this state, one shall be a registered 141

architect, one shall be a registered professional engineer, 142  
specializing in structural engineering, and one shall be a 143  
registered professional engineer specializing in mechanical 144  
engineering, except that a municipal board need not have an 145  
attorney as a member if no attorney member is required by the 146  
charter of the municipal corporation, or any amendment to the 147  
charter, adopted prior to October 13, 1983. Each of these four 148  
members shall be licensed to practice his profession in this 149  
state, and shall be a person of recognized ability and broad 150  
training who is experienced in problems and practice incidental 151  
to the construction and equipment of buildings and structures. 152  
One member shall be a representative of organized labor who is 153  
knowledgeable as to the construction and equipment of buildings 154  
and structures. 155

Members shall be appointed for five-year terms, except 156  
that original appointments shall be for terms of one, two, 157  
three, four, and five years. Each member shall hold office from 158  
the date of appointment until the end of the term for which he 159  
is appointed. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring 160  
before the expiration of the term for which his predecessor was 161  
appointed shall hold office for the remainder of that term. Any 162  
member shall continue in office subsequent to the expiration 163  
date of his term until his successor takes office or until sixty 164  
days have elapsed, whichever occurs first. 165

(D) Certification shall be upon application by the county 166  
or municipal corporation to the board of building standards. The 167  
application shall set forth both of the following: 168

(1) The resolution, ordinance, or charter provision 169  
establishing the local board of appeals and making or providing 170  
for the making of appointments to the board; 171

(2) The dates of appointments, terms of the board members, 172  
and professional requirements and experience necessary for 173  
membership. 174

(E) Upon reviewing the application, the board of building 175  
standards shall certify the local board if it finds all of the 176  
following: 177

(1) The applicant political subdivision has a building 178  
department that is certified pursuant to section 3781.10 of the 179  
Revised Code and such certification is not through a contract 180  
with another political subdivision; 181

(2) The local board is established pursuant to local 182  
resolution, ordinance, or municipal charter; 183

(3) The local board's membership meets the requirements of 184  
this section. 185

The board of building standards shall certify county and 186  
municipal boards of building appeals in accordance with Chapter 187  
119. of the Revised Code and shall schedule a hearing on an 188  
application within sixty days after receiving the application. 189

A certification may be revoked on petition to the board of 190  
building standards by any person affected by the local board of 191  
building appeals, or by the board of building standards on its 192  
own motion. Hearings shall be held and appeals permitted, on any 193  
proceedings for revocation of certification, in accordance with 194  
Chapter 119. of the Revised Code. 195

(F) Local boards of appeals certified pursuant to this 196  
section have the same powers to reverse or modify orders of the 197  
local enforcement official and to grant variances as are 198  
conferred on the board of building appeals by section 3781.19 of 199  
the Revised Code including variances and exemptions from the 200

requirements of section 3781.108 of the Revised Code. 201

Nothing in this section shall be construed to grant to a 202  
municipal or county board of building appeals any authority to 203  
prohibit the use of materials or assemblages that have been 204  
licensed for statewide use pursuant to section 3781.12 of the 205  
Revised Code. 206

Sec. 3781.21. (A) (1) Any appeal of an order requested 207  
under section 3781.19 or 3781.20 of the Revised Code may be 208  
requested to be expedited. If the expedited appeal is requested, 209  
the state board of building appeals or a certified municipal or 210  
county board of appeals shall do both of the following: 211

(a) Commence the appeal within one day after the request 212  
was made, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays as 213  
defined in section 1.14 of the Revised Code; 214

(b) Hold a hearing within five days after the request was 215  
made, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays as 216  
defined in section 1.14 of the Revised Code. 217

(2) (a) If a person requests an appeal of an order pursuant 218  
to section 3781.19 or 3781.20 of the Revised Code and the person 219  
did not request the appeal to be expedited under division (A) (1) 220  
of this section, the person may request the remainder of the 221  
appeal proceeding be expedited if, during the course of the 222  
appeal, the board issues a continuance of the hearing, such that 223  
no decision is made and additional evidence is requested in 224  
order to continue the proceeding. A person may request that any 225  
follow-up hearing be expedited within five days of the 226  
continuance being issued. 227

(b) If the expedited appeal is requested under division 228  
(A) (2) (a) of this section, the board shall hold the follow-up 229



hearing within five days of the request, excluding Saturdays, 230  
Sundays, and legal holidays as defined in section 1.14 of the 231  
Revised Code. 232

(3) Any expedited appeal under this division shall apply 233  
notwithstanding the seven-day notice requirement under section 234  
119.07 of the Revised Code or any other conflicting provision of 235  
the Revised Code. However, a board conducting an expedited 236  
appeal under this section shall provide all parties a notice of 237  
the hearing prior to conducting the hearing. 238

(B) The person making the request for an expedited appeal 239  
pursuant to division (A) of this section shall pay any fee 240  
established by the state board of building appeals under section 241  
3781.19 of the Revised Code or a certified municipal or county 242  
board of appeals under section 3781.20 of the Revised Code, 243  
which shall not exceed five hundred dollars for each day the 244  
appeal is pending and shall not exceed a total of one thousand 245  
dollars for the entire expedited appeal. 246

(C) Notwithstanding any provision of the Revised Code to 247  
the contrary, the state board of building appeals or a certified 248  
municipal or county board of appeals may conduct an expedited 249  
hearing, as described under this section, by means of 250  
teleconference, video conference, or any other similar 251  
electronic technology. 252

(D) The board of building standards may adopt rules to 253  
implement this section. 254

**Section 2.** That existing sections 3781.19 and 3781.20 of 255  
the Revised Code are hereby repealed. 256