



THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

Occupational Licensing Reform Opens Doors for Ohio's Workers

Interested Party Testimony
Ohio Senate Government Oversight Committee
Ohio House Bill 238

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As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify regarding **Ohio House Bill 238**.

My name is Greg R. Lawson. I am a research fellow at **The Buckeye Institute**, an independent research and educational institution—a think tank—whose mission is to advance free-market public policy in the states.

Senate Bill 255 of the 132nd General Assembly instructs legislative panels to weed through Ohio’s overgrown thicket of unnecessary bureaucratic licensing boards and training requirements. The Buckeye Institute **championed** that effort and supports the latest review of licensing requirements in House Bill 238.

The Buckeye Institute appreciates the reform efforts of sponsors, representatives Fowler Arthur and Klopfenstein, the members of the House State and Local Government Committee, and legislative staff. Occupational licensing rules may not make news headlines, but they do make a difference in the lives of workers looking to start or extend their careers.

House Bill 238 improves upon the Senate Bill 255 legislative review process by redefining and expanding which licenses are subject to that review. The current definition leaves too many burdensome licenses unexamined, so House Bill 238’s new definition takes a good step forward.

The Buckeye Institute’s **Opening Doors** policy brief recently identified 47 licenses that Ohio should eliminate or reform—nearly half of them appeared in House Bill 238 as it emerged from the House. Notably, the bill eliminates the two-year post-secondary education required for real estate brokers, which will reduce pre-licensing costs, increase competition, and better align Ohio’s requirements with neighboring states. Regrettably, the training hours required for cosmetology and barber licenses remains ripe for significant reduction. The Buckeye Institute has long argued that Ohio is out of step with a growing consensus in other states that reducing state training requirements will make it easier for more cosmetologists and hair stylists to enter the profession.

The House rightly approved—and this Committee appears ready to recommend—the extension of license durations for several other professions, including residential real estate appraisers, backflow technician certifications, and some private investigators. By extending the duration of approved licenses, professionals can remain focused on their professions rather than paperwork. Similarly, the House and this Committee have called for licensing fee reductions for several professions, including manufactured home installers and real estate appraisers. And this Committee has also proposed streamlining requirements for certified public accountants—a recommendation The Buckeye Institute applauds.

The House Committee initially proposed eliminating the Motor Vehicle Repair Board, a relatively small government body solely responsible for hearing automobile repair complaints that, according to its own **responses**, averages just 100 investigations per year. Modern technology, social media, and consumer education organizations like the Better Business Bureau have made this taxpayer-funded entity redundant. Unfortunately, the board was retained before the bill was voted out of committee. We recommend its elimination.

One legislative step yet to be taken—but should be—would create a joint committee tasked with ongoing licensing review. That joint committee’s purview could eventually include reviewing broader regulatory issues and guarantee that elected General Assembly members, not unelected bureaucrats, remain engaged in the vigilant fight against inefficient, counterproductive licensing requirements.

Once more, thank you, Chair Roegner, for your long-standing commitment to licensing reform and to the Committee members for your diligent efforts to reduce Ohio’s bureaucratic burdens. I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.



About The Buckeye Institute

Founded in 1989, The Buckeye Institute is an independent research and educational institution – a think tank – whose mission is to advance free-market public policy in the states.

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