



Sub Senate Bill 105 Proponent Testimony
House Economic Development & Workforce Committee
October 26, 2021
Stephanie Keinath, Vice President
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair Powell, Ranking Member Upchurch, and members of the House Economic Development & Workforce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Sub Senate Bill 105 today. My name is Stephanie Keinath and I am the Vice President of the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce. As the leading voice of business in the Dayton region, the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce represents over 2200 members across nine counties in southwest Ohio. Ten years ago, in a commitment to the growth & support of minority businesses in our community, the chamber created the Minority Business Partnership (MBP), a program which has provided our minority business enterprises (MBE's) with the resources and connections they need to scale their businesses and connect to large purchasing organizations in the region.

For these members, and for many other MBE's across the state of Ohio, Sub Senate Bill 105 provides a much needed opportunity to streamline the certification process and makes it easier for MBE's to do business in Ohio. Currently, in order to do business across multiple political subdivisions, MBE's in Ohio must apply for and maintain multiple certifications- processes which take time and resources away from operating & growing the business. We've heard from so many of our members that Senate Bill 105 would cut through some of the red tape, make it easier to operate in Ohio and would improve minority participation in local business opportunities.

We commend the work of Senators Vernon Sykes and Kirk Schuring for their leadership on this important legislation and we strongly support their work to include language that also extends reciprocity to women business enterprises (WBE's) and veteran business enterprises (VBE's) in Ohio. Ultimately, Sub Senate Bill 105 will make it easier for businesses to operate & grow in Ohio.

As we work to strengthen and streamline the certification process in Ohio and as these certifications become more relevant to programs and benefits, I would also urge this committee to consider supporting changes to the MBE **application process that more effectively serves the core purpose of certifying *only* relevant facts that specifically and directly prove 1) the identity, residency and disadvantaged status of the principals of the business, 2) ownership and control of the business, and 3) that the business is operational.** And, as a matter of principal and good policy, it shouldn't be any more difficult to get certified as an MBE than it is to get certified as a WBE or VBE – which it currently is.



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According to the Ohio Department of Development, there are 1145 certified MBEs in Ohio. According to the U.S Small Business Administration, there are 122,602 MBEs in Ohio. That means that less than 1% of Ohio MBEs are registered. We view the MBE certification as a prime opportunity to encourage and promote increased business opportunities for minority entrepreneurs. If we can improve the application process and get more MBEs certified, we can broaden the ability of MBEs to seek out business opportunities and realize the benefits of being certified.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for Sub Senate Bill 105 today. We strongly believe that this legislation will make a difference and I look forward to working with you as we examine how best to support minority-, women- and veteran-owned businesses and grow Ohio's economy.