



# THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

## **Eliminating Occupational Licenses Opens Doors to Opportunity**

Interested Party Testimony  
Ohio House State & Local Government Committee  
Ohio House Bill 238

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As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Chairman John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify regarding House Bill 238.

My name is Greg R. Lawson. I am the 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 132<sup>nd</sup> 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 today supports **House Bill 238** as the latest review of licensing burdens that need to change.

Chairman John, Committee members, and legislative staff deserve credit for tackling this issue. Occupational licensing rules may not make political 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 licensing review process by redefining and expanding which licenses are subject to legislative review. The current definition leaves too many business licenses unexamined and unreviewed despite their direct negative impact on workers, so House Bill 238’s new definition takes a good step forward.

The Buckeye Institute’s most recent **Opening Doors** policy brief identified 47 licenses that Ohio should eliminate or reform—nearly half of them appear in House Bill 238. Well done. Eliminating the two-year’s of post-secondary education required for real estate brokers, for example, will reduce pre-licensing costs, increase competition, and better align Ohio with neighboring states. Similarly, reducing the training hours needed for cosmetology and barber licensing will make it easier for more to enter the profession. The required hours should be reduced even further to 1,000 hours, and the “natural hair stylist” license should be eliminated, but House Bill 238 makes a good start.

This Committee has wisely eliminated the Motor Vehicle Repair Board, a relatively small government body solely responsible for hearing auto 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 long made this taxpayer-funded entity redundant. And the Committee has extended license durations for several other professions, including plumbing inspectors, residential real estate appraisers, barbers, and some private investigators. Extended durations reduce needless licensing costs for those already practicing their profession.

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

Once more, thank you Chairman John and members of the Committee for your diligent efforts to help reduce Ohio's bureaucratic burdens. I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.



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