

PROPONENT TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 442

Given by: Susan Gingerich
Commerce and Labor Committee
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Room 121

Chairman Yuko, members of the Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for hearing the proponents of HB 442. I am Susan Gingerich, President of Ohio Sunshine Health Freedom Coalition. Our organization began in 2006 with the purpose of creating accessibility for consumers in Ohio to alternative health care modalities. We have 420 members and donors and through individual lists communicate with thousands of Ohio Consumers. Our mission is to obtain the right to a free and educated choice concerning health options to Ohio citizens; HB 442 embodies the solution.

The problem is that a number of healing options for consumers in Ohio are not readily available to them. The occupational boards in Ohio are responsible for taking action against people for unlicensed practice of a profession. However, sometimes these actions are taken when there is no harm to consumers. For example, according to the annual report to the legislature from the dietitian's board, the board has taken action against 114 unlicensed people, including herbalists, supplement sales, fitness & personal trainers, clinical nutritionists, wellness centers, weight loss businesses, and other licensed professionals since 2005. That's an average of 23 per year.

The problem we are facing is that our current laws do not reflect today's culture. People keep seeking answers when their health issues have not been resolved through conventional methods. We have information available through literature, detailing research and non-standard treatments that people are looking for. When

answers to health issues are missing, people continue to seek solutions.

I was one of these people. I was disabled for two years and could not be helped by conventional medical care so I sought alternative options. After restoring my own health, I then went on to become a practitioner. Since that time, I have helped thousands of people as well as taught an introduction to herbal medicine class at Columbus State College, spoke at herbalists seminars and natural health organizations across the country.

There are many schools, resources and certification programs which beckon us and allow many practitioners to constantly educate themselves. These alternative practitioners reside all over Ohio, and many have practiced for decades, contributing sales tax, income tax, and jobs to Ohioans as well as less expensive health options.

The intent of HB 442 is to create a law in Ohio that protects consumer options, while at the same time keeping in place the ability of the state to protect the public. In addition, we hope HB 442 will clarify how alternative and complementary practitioners are able to practice under Ohio law. Consumers want to protect their access to alternate forms of health care because they want all available options when choosing an appropriate treatment.

Joining us today, is a variety of people testifying in support of HB 442. These individuals also want to help you understand why you should support this bill. The group we have invited to testify is made up of individuals from different perspectives to help shed some light on HB 442. They are Diane Miller, an attorney who works nationally drafting and developing these kinds of legislative solutions in many states. We also have Dr. Feister, a Doctor of Osteopathy, who is a supporter of our practitioners and consumers

who are impacted by this bill. Lastly, we have Dave Hemmert, a consumer.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this measure. I will be happy to address your questions, concerns and comments.

Susan Gingerich Ph.D. Early Childhood Education OSU