

Ohio Counseling Association Advocacy Update

The Ohio Counseling Association (OCA) is strongly opposed to House Bill 617 and SB 366, which are companion pieces of legislation that could **greatly** affect the counseling profession in Ohio. Representative LaTourette (R- Bainbridge Twp.), who is a part of House Leadership, introduced HB 617 on November 15th. There are no co-sponsors to the legislation. Senator Bill Seitz (R- Cincinnati) also introduced SB 366 on November 15th. Senator John Eklund (R- Chardon) is a co-sponsor.

If enacted, these pieces of legislation would consolidate several allied healthcare professional boards. Under this proposal, counselors would be licensed by a newly created Behavioral Health Professionals Board. **A counselor would not be guaranteed a seat on the Behavioral Health Professionals Board.**

The Ohio General Assembly is currently in “Lame Duck” session. All priority pieces of legislation **will pass before the end of the year**. It is critical to let your legislator know that this legislation is bad policy and could impact your profession drastically.

Senate Bill 366 has not yet been assigned to a committee. House Bill 617 has been assigned to the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee. Following is a make up of the committee:

Chairman Blessing (R) Cincinnati	614-466-9091
Vice-Chairman Rezabek (R) Clayton	614-466-2960
Ranking Minority Member Clyde (D) Kent	614-466-2004
Representative Amstutz (R) Wooster	614-466-1474
Representative Buchy (R) Greenville	614-466-6344
Representative Butler (R) Oakwood	614-466-6008
Representative Green (R) Mt. Orab	614-644-6034
Representative McColley (R) Napoleon	614-466-3760
Representative Pelandia (R) Marysville	614-466-8147
Representative Smith (R) Bidwell	614-466-1366
Representative Curtin (D) Marble Cliff	614-644-6005
Representative Howse (D) Cleveland	614-466-1414
Representative Leland (D) Columbus	614-466-2473

OCA urges you to **CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS!** If you don't know who your state legislator is, you can find it here using your zip code:

<http://www.ohiohouse.gov/committee/government-accountability-and-oversight>