

OHIO BILL WOULD CREATE STATE-RUN CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS



BY CHRIS VEST, CAE / SEP 10, 2018

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ASAE is urging its members to weigh in on legislation pending in the Ohio Senate that would impact professional certification programs run by associations.

With support from ASAE and the Professional Certification Coalition (PCC), associations are raising concerns about a bill in the Ohio Senate that calls for the government to set up its own voluntary certification programs in certain cases to compete with those administered by associations. Ohio Senate Bill 255 passed the Ohio Senate in June and has been introduced in the House but has not yet been referred to a committee.

The bill defines certification as “a voluntary program in which a private organization or the state grants nontransferable recognition to an individual who meets personal qualifications established by the private organization or state law.” The bill text goes on to state, “If regulations are intended to protect consumers against asymmetrical information between the seller and the buyer, the appropriate state action shall be to offer voluntary certification.”

After associations reached out to Ohio legislators, a co-sponsor of the bill indicated that the government may follow through on the language in the bill to set up voluntary certification programs that would compete with the associations, said Jim Clarke, CAE, ASAE's senior vice president for public policy. ASAE is encouraging members to contact Ohio lawmakers regarding their concerns about potential state-run certification programs and their impact on credentials issued by private-sector organizations with subject matter expertise.

The PCC, which includes nearly 80 associations and other credentialing organizations, is engaged in this issue, as well as the fight to defend voluntary certification around the country, Clarke said.

"In recent months we have seen challenges to voluntary professional credentialing across the country," ASAE said in a [July statement announcing the launch of PCC](#). "While we have had success in some states in pushing back against this legislation, we know that 12 states introduced bills concerning to the association community this year. We expect to see more legislation introduced around the country in January when many state legislatures begin their work for 2019."