



NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING SERVICES OF GREATER CLEVELAND, INC.

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Honorable Chairperson and Members of the House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development Committee,

My name is Michael Pires, and I am the Interim Executive Director for Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Cleveland Inc. (NHS). I am writing to express my concerns and opposition to House Bill 282. While we appreciate a landlord's interest in protecting their investments, this proposed bill is not an appropriate response and potentially hurts many more people than it helps. Beyond that, the proposed bill confuses the issue further because it potentially muddies existing federal, state and local laws and ordinances already on the books to address these civil concerns.

NHS's mission is to provide ongoing programs and services to help residents achieve, preserve, and, sustain the American Dream of homeownership. This mission is the foundation on which we build our many successes. We truly believe in the continued collaborations with our corporate, governmental, and non-profit partners in the areas of homeownership education and preservation. These efforts will have an increasingly positive impact the lives of the residents and the communities of our service area. When serving homeownership clients, we often hear horror stories from low to moderate income people in adverse rental situations. Many of these people are disabled and are victims of some form of domestic violence. So unfortunately the people who are struggling the most will be disproportionately affected. House Bill 282 will make it even harder for people as they try to find safe and affordable rental property. This ultimately leads to greater instability in the housing market and an increase in homelessness.

Each person has a story to tell and sometimes things in life are not black and white. Looking at a person's background is only one narrow tool. It doesn't really tell you who they are, where they came from, what happened to them and what they are doing to try and improve themselves. This bill casts a wide net on tenants and doesn't speak to landlords who sometimes create problems either through their negligence in making required repairs to property or even worse, are absentee.

House Bill 282 also raises legitimate federal preemption issues and the ability of a state to control who qualifies for federal housing assistance. There are also fair housing and civil rights concerns. Again the potential for there to be a disparate effect on those people already in protected classes under current federal and state fair housing laws is very real. NHS appreciates your consideration as we write to oppose House Bill 282.

Very Respectfully,

Michael Pires
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