

**Interested Party Testimony on House Bill 390**  
**By**  
**Bryan Brown**  
**Chief Operating Officer, Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority.**  
**Before**  
**House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development**  
**Committee**

**June 26, 2018**

Chairman Dever, Vice Chair Hoops and Ranking Member Smith, my name is Bryan Brown, and I am the Chief Operating Officer of the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority.

The Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority owns and operates about 2,400 housing units across Columbus and Franklin County and manages rental assistance for 13,000 households in 50 different ZIP codes in Franklin County. Yet, there is much more to do to address critical need for affordable housing in Franklin County and across the state of Ohio. In Franklin County, there are 54,000 households who lack access to quality affordable and sustainable housing.

In 1994 almost 90 percent of our residents lived in the urban core. Today, almost half of our residents live outside the urban core. Accordingly, the landscape of affordable housing has changed, and the state law has not kept pace with what has become standard for housing authorities nationwide.

I am here to provide interested party testimony on the amendments to HB 390 that affect Metropolitan Housing Authorities. The amendments modernize 1930s – era language contained in the Chapter 3735 that regulates Metropolitan Housing Authorities.

**Mixed Income and Mixed Use Developments**

The amendments to HB 390 make it crystal clear that mixed income and mixed use developments fit within the purpose of metropolitan housing authorities.

The added language clarifies that housing authorities can develop mixed-income facilities. Increasingly, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development has called for housing authorities to build developments that provide a mix of subsidized and market-rate housing. This preferred approach has the effect of decreasing the density of low income residents in neighborhoods or communities. By doing this, property values are stabilized and economic diversity is maintained rather than increased isolation of those who need housing and services.

The added language further clarifies that housing authorities can develop mixed use facilities. Recently, there has been increased concern that lower income Ohioans in urban and rural areas often lack access to basic amenities such as grocery stores with nutritious food or pharmacies. Also, the residents in our housing developments often require supportive services such as workforce development, health care, and counseling services and would prefer that these services be as accessible as possible. The added language clarifies that housing authorities can respond to the needs of their residents and provide these services within their developments.

### **Shared services**

The amendments clarify that housing authorities may collaborate with other housing authorities and non-profits. The programs that HUD implements have become increasingly complex. As a result, some housing authorities have spent considerable time and energy developing working knowledge of how these programs operate. The language in the amendments to HB 390 permits more experienced housing authorities to lend their expertise contractually to other less experienced housing authorities and non-profits, thus saving the recipients of this knowledge the time and expense of developing redundant expertise while aligning resources with a like-minded housing authority that shares its mission.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to testify today and welcome any questions that you might have regarding the provisions that I have discussed. Our attorneys from Kegler, Brown, Hill and Ritter are here to field any more technical questions that you might have.