



# Testimony: HB 390

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Chairman Dever, Ranking member Smith, and members of the committee, I would like to wish you all a happy holiday season. My name is Nick Bates, I am a Deacon in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and director of The Hunger Network in Ohio - an ecumenical ministry. The Hunger Network believes we can end hunger in Ohio by addressing the root causes of poverty.

The Hunger Network in Ohio stands in opposition to shortening the timeline of evictions through the inclusion of weekends and holidays in the calculation of days. While we all value an unambiguous process, it does not need to come at the expense of fairness. As outlined in the LSC Analysis of this bill, notice provided on a Thursday should lead to a filing, at earliest Tuesday, but ideally even later than that.

We should work to reduce the number of evictions in Ohio, because, once the process begins, it is a hurdle for folks that leads to housing instability and homelessness. We know that homelessness hurts student's education, increases health problems (including infant mortality rates), and becomes a barrier to maintaining employment. Is filing paperwork on Monday morning, instead of Tuesday or Wednesday, really worth these social and economic costs?

People of faith across Ohio regularly assist households on the verge of eviction in many ways. Some Congregations and Synagogues will help pay back rent and work with families to regain some level of financial stability. Other congregations have mission team volunteers who help those struggling to get by navigate public and charitable assistance systems. And I know pastors who have personally borrowed a truck to help individuals move. Christian Seminaries may teach Greek and Hebrew, but they need to add a class on lifting with their legs and navigating a couch down apartment stairs.

The reality is that each of the stories I hear are unique. Sometimes it is an elderly individual struggling to pay the bills, other times it is a family trying to flee domestic violence, and other times it is a family trying to survive in a low-wage economy.

These communities, volunteers, and faith leaders do these things because they want to live out the command to love thy neighbor. If the goal is to avoid evictions, we must guarantee a reasonable amount of time for a household to request and receive assistance or figure out a plan on their own that will lead toward stability. It is better for all parties involved when the family can pay their bills or move out on their own and avoid the bureaucracy of the eviction process.

We like clarity. It helps volunteers, advocates, and clergy in communicating to families in crisis, but clarity does not need to come at the expense of a fair process. May God bless you as you answer your call to serve our neighbors who are most in need. I am happy to answer any questions.

## Our Policy Platform:

1

### FEED PEOPLE TODAY

Emergency food programs provide immediate assistance to families.

2

### EDUCATE TO END HUNGER

High quality education is key to fighting poverty and hunger.

3

### SUPPORT AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR ALL

The economy should provide fair wages and protect against exploitation.

4

### BUILD HEALTHY HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

We need a wholistic approach to 'community' to end hunger.