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State Representative Rick Perales

Ohio's 73rd House District: Western Portion of Greene County

**House Bill 139 – Sponsor Testimony
Representatives Rick Perales and Candice Keller
House State and Local Government Committee
April 25, 2017**

Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley and Ranking Member Bishoff, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 139, which open up certain records to the public after 100 years that are currently inaccessible. Some of my constituents brought it to my attention that under current law, a number of records are scheduled for permanent retention and rendered inaccessible for public consumption. This list of documents includes information pertaining to the following:

- Adoptions
- County Home Registers
- Children's Home Registers
- Juvenile Court Cases
- Witness Dockets

- Lunacy Records
- Inheritance Tax Records
- Veterans' Relief Records

This is important information one would need to discover their family's heritage or the history of their region. This legislation seeks to unseal these documents 100 years after the creation of the document. The sealed time period of 100 years takes into consideration any complications or emotional impact that opening these records might have for certain individuals since it allows the timespan of at least one generation to pass. This is similar to the federal policy to lift restrictions on United States census records after 72 years.

In 2015 the Ohio General Assembly passed legislation opening confidential records of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services 50 years after the patient's death. HB 139 will allow 100 years to pass after the creation of the listed records to release them. This should allow adequate time to pass before the sensitive personal information of the targeted records are released.

Several other states have already passed open access legislation for similar types of historical records, and with the rich and vibrant history of this state, it is our duty to make sure our future generations the ability to tell that story.

HB 138 is supported by County Archivists and Records Managers Association (CARMA), and has been through preliminary vetting with state agencies and organizations including the office of the Ohio Attorney General, and so far has received no opposition. Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Bishoff, and members of the House State and Local Government committee, thank you for your consideration of House Bill 139, and I am happy to answer any questions you have.