



Office of State Representative Stephanie Howse
House District II

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, June 13, 2018

Sponsor Testimony of HB 662 – Welcoming Ohio

Good Morning Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes and members of the State and Local Government Committee. I want to thank you for allowing Representative Ramos and I to give sponsor testimony on House Bill 662 (HB 662) – Welcoming Ohio.

Throughout its existence as a state, Ohio has been home to millions of immigrant families and the impact of their legacy. In recent years, however, their contribution has fallen victim to raids, persecution, and deportation from federal authorities- most if which have resulted in devastating consequences for the local economy and worsening our social fabric.

HB 662 is legislation that would enable local governments to decide how to allocate their law enforcement resources, without having to comply with federal immigration laws that would otherwise hinder businesses and entire communities. This repurposing would also allow greater flexibility amongst local communities, helping the decision-making process based on different social needs and obstacles that might be unique to a specific community. In speaking to the Hannah News last year, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation (OFBF) spokesperson Joe Cornely said "We need a system in place that allows farmers to have workers that they can count on. And by count on, I mean they know what the rules are and the rules are accommodative to agriculture's needs," he noted the recent figures showing 70 percent of farm workers in the U.S. are undocumented immigrants. "That's massive. So how do we provide border security and national security but still accommodate our need to have people help feed America? So we're looking for balance in that equation, and balance is never easy to attain but we keep pursuing it."

HB 662 could help prevent the mishandling of tax dollars and local law enforcement, assuring safer environments for our immigrant citizens and their families who, in recent times, have been forcefully separated by law enforcement under the command of federal laws that do not necessarily adhere to the circumstances of local communities. We all know of the tragedy that occurred in Sandusky, Ohio last week, where more than 100 people were arrested in a military-styled raid at Corso's Flower and Garden Center. What's the aftermath? Families destroyed, children who are thrust into becoming heads of households, mental trauma and the list goes on. Is this the Ohio we want?

Committees:
Aging and Long-Term Care (Ranking Member
Community and Family Advancement
Transportation and Public Safety

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We cannot on one hand personally benefit from the labor of immigrants through their productivity in Ohio's agricultural community, at the same time demean cultures, destroy families and make divisive comments about the same immigrant communities in Ohio we need to support our economy. Let's look forward in helping to bring balance to our state and work together with our local communities to provide the necessary flexibility to meet the needs of their local economy. I would like to thank the committee for listening to my testimony this morning and would like to now bring your attention to my joint sponsor's testimony Rep. Dan Ramos, who will provide additional details as to why we urgently need your support of HB 662. We will be happy to answer any questions at the conclusion of his remarks.

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