



Representative Darrell Kick
70th House District

Sponsor Testimony – HB 209

Chairman Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 209.

When I voted in favor of House Bill 407 during the last General Assembly, it seemed like a common sense bill to abolish a provision that is no longer relevant in today's society. Since casting that vote, I have heard numerous accounts of how dower has adversely affected people in their everyday lives.

Two different women, who reside out of state, wished to deed property to someone else. They both traveled to Ohio only to be informed that their husbands had to release their dower before any transactions could move forward. This has led to a lengthy process for one involving notaries and delays.

An opponent of the bill last General Assembly stated that dower serves to protect women from their spouse liquidating or mortgaging property unbeknownst to them. However, many banks require a spouse's signature on paperwork. Besides being an inconvenience, dower can be used to hurt women. One story I heard involved a woman who wanted to sell her property to ensure that the money went to her children in the event that something happened to her. Her abusive husband has refused to relinquish his dower effectively keeping his thumb on her. Another man,

who is currently in jail, has refused a divorce and is holding hostage any potential transaction for his wife, who has a 5% interest in a property shared with her relatives. A provision that was once meant to protect widows is now being used to harm women.

I am typically not of the mindset that we should do something just because all the other states have. However, as my joint sponsor stated, we are one of three states who still observes dower, yet we are not hearing an outcry of spouses who have been wronged due to the absence of dower in other states. Let's simplify the paperwork for our residents and people who do business in Ohio.

Thank you Chairman Hambley and members of the committee for your time. My joint sponsor and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.