



House Bill 356 and 357 Sponsor Testimony

Representative Tom Patton

Chairman Hambley and members of the Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bills 356 and 357. I would like to point out House Bills 356 and 357 are companion bills to Senate Bills 96 and 103, sponsored by Senators Dolan and Yuko.

House Bill 356 grants the Cleveland Housing Court jurisdiction in any review or appeal of a final order of an administrative body that relates to a local building, health, or safety code. The Cleveland Housing Court's jurisdiction in these matters would run concurrent with the jurisdiction of the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas. The court of common pleas currently holds exclusive jurisdiction of these appeals in Cuyahoga County. Last year alone, the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas heard over 2,500 appeals.

House Bill 357 would grant the Housing Division of the Cleveland Municipal Court concurrent jurisdiction with the Court of Common Pleas in criminal cases related to environmental pollution. The Cleveland Housing Court is fit to hear appeals of felony environment cases because they are currently deciding crimes arising from the violation of the City's zoning, health, waste collection and air pollution codes.

These bills would create the same shared jurisdiction as the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas and the Franklin County Municipal Court Environmental Division, and would free up the Cuyahoga Court of Common Pleas to devote greater time to handling serious violent crimes.

The Cleveland Housing Court judge will be providing proponent testimony on these proposals. House Bills 356 and 357 are supported by the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas, the Cuyahoga County Council, the Cleveland Municipal Court, Cleveland City Council, and Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson.

Thank you for your time and consideration for allowing me to speak on behalf of House Bills 356 and 357. At this time, I would be happy to answer any questions.