



Representative Louis W. Blessing, III

Sponsor Testimony HB 20
June 26, 2019

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Ginter, Ranking Member Kelly, and Members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 20.

House Bill 20 would prohibit condominium, homeowners, and neighborhood associations from preventing individuals installing solar collector systems, or solar panels, on their roofs. This issue was brought to my attention by a constituent whose homeowners association does not allow for solar panels in their community. Currently, there is nothing he can do to circumvent the association's decision and he is not allowed to install the solar panels on his roof. Since its introduction, several people have reached out to my office alerting me they are in the same situation and are eagerly awaiting the passage of this bill.

The goal of HOAs and similar associations is to increase the value of the community. Presumably, the addition of solar panels will increase the value of a property, therefore aligning with an association's mission. It would be my hope and understanding that most associations would not prevent the installation of solar panels. However, we know now that this is not always the case.

As you may remember in the 131st General Assembly, HB 18 was passed unanimously and enacted so that HOAs, condo associations, and the like cannot restrict the display of the U.S. flag, Ohio flag, POW/MIA flag, and other service flags. Similarly, House Bill 20 was drafted in the same section of the ORC.

House Bill 20 prohibits unreasonable limitations on the installation of solar collector systems. An unreasonable limitation as defined in the bill includes a limitation that

significantly increases the cost, or significantly decreases the efficiency, of the solar collector system. This means HOAs can still have a say in the aesthetic aspects of the solar panels, so long as they do not significantly impact the cost or efficiency of installing the system.

House Bill 20 clarifies that solar panels may be installed “so long as there is no competing use of the roof or exterior walls.” This ensures that in instances of living in a shared building, one owner of a unit cannot gain the sole rights to use a roof for solar panels.

House Bill 20 would simply allow Ohioans living in condominium, homeowners, and neighborhood associations to take advantage of an energy and cost saving home improvement measure on their property if they so choose. House Bill 20 has co-sponsors from Members of both parties representing urban, rural, and suburban areas. People from all areas of Ohio are ready to invest in their properties and cut costs on energy. We can ensure nothing is stopping property owners from this right.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 20. I am happy to answer any questions from the committee.