



Office of Representative John E. Barnes, Jr.

Thank you, Chairman Ginter, Ranking Member Boyd and my esteemed colleagues in the Community and Family Advancement Committee for the opportunity to give sponsor testimony on House Bill 204.

The purpose of this bill is to create an environment of facilitation amongst non-governmental organizations that exist all throughout Ohio. With the lean operations of NGOs, administrative costs are often not absorbed by the services that are provided in communities. The ability to develop a strategy through which we can reach out to NGOs around the country is diminished because we do not currently have access to facilitate this. This initiative will be in place so that we can provide assistance to these organizations that otherwise would not have the resources to do so on their own. In addition, the state of Ohio is a recipient of many federal grants, which expire. In the past, we have had to return that money to the federal government for not having been able to use it for whatever reason. The grants were not used for the purposes for which they were intended. Citizens of Ohio were not getting the full return for their federal dollars, which were allocated for serving them in a socioeconomic sense. On a first come first serve basis, the Department of Grants and Philanthropic Gestures will carry out the purpose of disseminating those funds so that the people can be serviced.

House Bill 204 creates, as an administrative department of the state, the Department of Grants and Philanthropic Gestures. The Department is to be administered by the Director of Grants and Philanthropic Gestures, who is appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate.

House Bill 204 requires the Department of Grants and Philanthropic Gestures to:

- assemble information, and serve as a clearinghouse making information available to the public, regarding each grant and the criteria for applying to receive a grant, that may be available from the state and from the federal government, and regarding all sources of private, philanthropic assistance, financial or otherwise, that are available to Ohio residents;
- solicit private donations to provide grants and assistance, financial or otherwise, for economic development, health, safety, and morals; and
- identify barriers, and suggest ways of removing barriers, to entry into business, including entry into foreign markets, for Ohio residents.

The Department may receive and accept gifts, grants, donations, and similar funds from any lawful source to be used for the above purposes. The funds must be deposited in the state treasury to the credit of the Department of Grants and Philanthropic Gestures, Gifts and Grants Fund, which the bill creates. If a grant or assistance is based on a private donation solicited by the Department, the Department must ensure that the grant or assistance is provided in cooperation with the donor, and that any instructions the donor may have given with regard to the donation are complied with. In addition, the Department will have authorization to retain the services of, or designate, and fix the compensation of, consultants, advisers, and other independent contractors to carry out the bill's purposes. The Director of the Department would be required to create a registry of these consultants, advisers, and contractors, and make the registry available to the public.

Under existing law not changed by the bill, the director of a state department is required to undertake certain actions, for example, appoint an assistant director, establish divisions within the department with the Governor's approval, and take an oath and give bond. These laws also apply to the Director of Grants and Philanthropic Gestures, as well as other laws in R.C Chapter 121.

Thank you again for this opportunity, I would be happy to answer any questions.