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Civil Justice
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State and Local Government Committee
Sponsor Testimony: Senate Concurrent Resolution 12
January 26, 2016

Chairman LaRose, Vice Chairman Hottinger, Members of the Committee: Thank you for allowing me to present sponsor testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution Number 12. This resolution encourages local governments of the State of Ohio to institute municipal identification card programs. Municipalities across the country, from New York City to San Francisco, issue these identification cards to their residents. They are particularly valuable to community members who may face barriers to obtaining a driver's license or other state-issued ID, such as the homeless, foster youth, undocumented immigrants, and the elderly.

This resolution will demonstrate our intention to make our communities more inclusive. Municipal identification programs are also an opportunity for our cities to be centers of democracy. This resolution is meant to show respect for the identity of all Ohioans, regardless of their status as a refugee, undocumented immigrant, or homeless person.

Cities like New Haven, Connecticut have come up with innovative administrative measures for their municipal ID programs that meet the needs of their residents and protect against fraud. Recipients can benefit from access to basic services and civic institutions where documentation of identity and residency is required. Reports from cities that have municipal ID programs indicate that the cards can serve an important public safety function. Residents carrying a card can easily establish their identity when interacting with law enforcement, especially if there is a language barrier.

This legislation does not mandate or force communities to institute an ID policy. Rather, the resolution sends a message of support to those communities that desire to do so. Thank you for allowing me to present sponsor testimony on SCR 12. I will be happy to answer any questions.

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