

Greetings Chairman Young, Vice Chairman Riedel, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan and members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to speak on my own and my community's behalf. My name is Jacob Gardner, a constituent from Cincinnati, Ohio where I work as a youth educator. I am also a student at the University of Cincinnati and I participate in multiple student organizations.

I would like to express my concern for House Bill 625, the preemption legislation that would restrict communities like my own from banning "auxiliary containers." This bill violates the rights of local municipalities and is an abuse of power on the state level. In addition, the environmental impact and the inability to reduce that impact is far too costly.

While Federal and State governments have high power and broad reach, I believe city and local governments are equally important. In fact, the local branch of government exists so that community members can easily and directly participate, setting in motion the change they want to see in the world. Cities and towns are the key to positive change. More so, the local government exists in the most densely populated areas of our state and nation. Certain local municipalities govern epicenters for economy, education, and livelihood which means they have every right to take action within their local areas based off the needs and wants of the local citizens. Preemption puts a block between citizens and the local government they are supposed to be a part of. It also disconnects voters from the representatives they voted for.

As an educator of young children, and a young person myself, I am constantly working to improve our society in all areas. One area I am particularly passionate about is the future condition of our environment because there is a direct relationship between the environmental health and human health. One very direct and physical cause of environmental degradation is through litter and solid waste disposal. Restricting the ability of local governments to pass bans on "auxiliary containers" or single use plastics would worsen Ohio's solid waste problem. I face a personal conflict when I am investing in our children's future, while their future may be compromised by environmental issues that this legislation would perpetuate.

An organization that I am proud to know and be a part of is Clean Up Cincy, a group based in the University of Cincinnati. Founded in 2015, Clean Up Cincy has grown to over 1,000 volunteers including students and community members. They host one large clean up event every semester. Their goal is to simply pick up trash and beautify Cincinnati. Their efforts make Cincinnati safer, more beautiful, and cleaner. This volunteer organization is one example of the many organizations whose efforts would be in vain. HB 625 would suggest that large volunteer organizations that work hard to improve their city, should not be able to partner with their own local government.

I appreciate your time, and thank you for reading my testimony. I am hopeful that my concerns for HB 625 were clear and helpful to the Committee.

Best Regards,

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