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Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 402

**Graham Bowman, Ohio Poverty Law Center
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Good afternoon Chair Cupp, Vice-Chair Carfagna, Ranking Member Ashford, and members of the committee,

My name is Graham Bowman. I am an attorney with the Ohio Poverty Law Center. Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding House Bill 402 and its impact on basic wireline telephone service in Ohio. I am opposed to House Bill 402.

The Ohio Poverty Law Center is a state-wide nonprofit law office that advocates for evidenced-based policies aimed at protecting the rights of low-income Ohioans living, working, and raising their families in poverty. We work closely with eight legal aid agencies that represent thousands of families every year across the state in promoting access to healthcare, family stability, and expanded access to justice and opportunity.

I support the testimony submitted by Mary Ellen Nose from the Southeastern Ohio Legal Services. OPLC deals on a daily basis with the needs of low-income Ohioans from across the state. We share many of the same concerns that she presented in her testimony. The potential for 20% increases in basic telephone service rates could harm many low-income Ohioans. And, the elimination of service quality standards for basic service would make the service they pay for less reliable.

For these reasons, I urge you to not vote for House Bill 402. Thank you.

/s/

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