



HOUSE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Proponent Testimony on HB 51

Thursday, February 23, 2017

Good morning Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Bischoff and members of the House State and Local Government Committee. My name is Micah Derry. I am the State Director of Americans for Prosperity- Ohio and am testifying on behalf of the 123,000 activists in our state chapter. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of House Bill 51 to establish a solid oversight process for state agencies.

Americans for Prosperity is a grassroots organization with activists across the state of Ohio who advocate and promote limited government, lower taxes, and greater freedom. We exist to recruit, educate, and mobilize citizens in support of the policies and goals of a free society at the local, state, and federal level, helping every American live their dream- especially the least fortunate.

Americans for Prosperity-Ohio supports House Bill 51 and has marked it as a Key Vote on our Legislative Scorecard. Making state agencies more efficient is a goal we all share. For accountability to be truly effective, there needs to be regular review of state agency functions beyond the budgetary process as well as consequences for those agencies failing to live up to the demands of their taxpayer-consumers.

House Bill 51 is a tremendous step forward in providing accountability by requiring state agencies to be reviewed on performance-based criteria and renewed by the legislature every four years. We view this not as a gimmick to ding underperforming agencies, but a review process to enhance and optimize taxpayer services.

House Bill 51 empowers the legislature to hold state agencies accountable by requiring the directors to obtain affirmative support from the very legislature that created them. Many of these agencies were created decades ago and in carrying out some of their functions may have drifted away from the original intent of the legislature. Inertia in government often makes it

difficult to enact commonsense reforms. By requiring agencies to receive approval every four years, House Bill 51 reverses that inertia.

The legislature's existing power over agencies through the budget process is not enough. I have clerked finance subcommittees in the budget season and I can affirm Representative Faber's assertion that the pressures of the legislative calendar often mean that Representatives and Senators only have a few weeks to review agency spending and functions; it happens in a pressure-cooker environment. House Bill 51 addresses this problem by creating an additional method for the legislature to hold state agencies in check.

This is not a one-sided opportunity. Everything I have stated about the obstacles the average legislator faces in evaluating agencies during budget season also applies to the agency director as they attempt to communicate their challenges and obstacles. The review prescribed in House Bill 51 provides a specific opportunity for an agency director to communicate the needs of his or her agency without the million distractions we all know abound between February and June in odd-numbered years.

Chair Anielski and committee, thank you for your time, I am happy to answer any questions at this time.