



OHIO TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION

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HB 39 Removal of Snow and Ice on Sidewalks Proponent Testimony House State & Local Government Committee February 28, 2017

On behalf of the Ohio Township Association (OTA), I would like to offer our support for House Bill 39, which permits certain boards of township trustees to require the removal of snow and ice from sidewalks abutting property and permits the township to impose a fine for failure to do so.

Townships are statutory governments and can only do what the *Ohio Revised Code* permits or inherently implies. Municipalities, on the other hand, have home rule powers and may currently adopt snow removal ordinances requiring residents to keep walkways free of snow and ice. Examples of Ohio municipalities that have such an ordinance include:

- Bowling Green
- Brecksville
- Cleveland Hts
- Perrysburg
- Toledo
- Stow
- Tallmadge
- Youngstown
- Lakewood

The OTA is very supportive of legislation that grants townships generally the same authorities as municipalities.

It is important to note that House Bill 39 grants only certain townships the *permissive* authority to adopt a resolution requiring the removal of snow and ice. Only townships that have had an average of five or more inches of snow during November-April over the previous 10-year period would be permitted to adopt such a resolution. Furthermore, no township that meets this qualifier would be required to pass such a resolution.

Townships, specifically in urban areas, have a mixed landscape of housing and business/retail development. Townships need the flexibility to implement regulations that will ensure the safety of residents and pedestrians that utilize sidewalks year round.

As you read in proponent testimony from Perkins Township in Erie County last week, they have significant commercial development and large residential neighborhoods abutting that development. Those neighborhoods have sidewalks that provide safe and convenient access to the commercial development, along with schools and churches. House Bill 39 will provide Perkins Township with the ability to ensure that their sidewalk infrastructure is available for use by all residents year round.

The Ohio Township Association supports House Bill 39 and encourages the State & Local Government Committee to favorably report the measure to the full House for passage. Madam Chair, thank you for the opportunity to share our position on this legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions you or members of the Committee may have.