

Ohio Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health and Medicaid

Interested Party Testimony on House Bill 49

Kandace Jones

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Chairman Hackett, Vice Chair Tavares, and members of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health and Medicaid – thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 49. My name is Kandace Jones and I have lived in Euclid since 1981, in the house I currently live in since 1984. The words THANK YOU are not enough to express the appreciation for the support from The Healthy Food for Ohio program in assisting with the opening of Simon Supermarket in Euclid.

I have been a neighborhood leader for many years focusing on helping others. In 2008 I was elected to Euclid City Council and this was another level for me to help others. I continued to meet and work with neighborhood groups in my ward on task and initiatives to strive for a positive community. One of the concerns residents expressed is a need to have a local grocery store that has quality fresh vegetables, fruits and meat selections. There was a small grocery store that opened for a short brief period but the vegetables were not fresh, barely any fruit selections. Prices were too high. One neighborhood group started a community garden to get the fresh vegetables they desired. While that was great for some not everyone can plant, and harvest their own vegetables. In 2011 The City of Euclid did a TLCI (Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative) of Euclid Avenue. Residents, business owners and other stakeholders could give their input, express their concerns. The results of the study identified certain areas of Euclid Avenue as “Food Deserts”. One of these locations is where Simons Supermarket is currently located. Residents had hopes there would be

an opportunity for a supermarket and other retail development along Euclid Avenue.

When I found out the Euclid Richmond Plaza was sold and the new owner was going to open a grocery store, my first thought this was going to be another undesired store. I took the initiative to visit the other 2 locations Mr. Simon had stores (in Cleveland). I was very pleasantly surprised to see the condition of the stores were clean, food quality was very good and prices very reasonable. As Mr. Simon worked with The City of Euclid on his plans he also agreed to have a meeting with the community to find out what do they want to see (products) in the store. The turnout for this meeting was awesome (est. 80). Mr. Simon listened to resident's suggestions and expressed he wants to give the community what they want and need in a grocery store. Since the opening of Simon Supermarket (December 2016), official grand opening February 2017, Mr. Simon has implemented some of the resident's suggestions. I hear residents express how happy they are to have Simons Supermarket in the neighborhood. The food quality and prices are very good. State Funding for the Healthy Food for Ohio Program is needed to support stores in other communities. I am in Simons several times a week and they store is always neat, clean and employees greet everyone with a hello and smile. Many of the employees are residents from the community.

Thank you for letting me share my comments.