

Kevin Bacon
3rd Ohio Senate District



Committees:

Judiciary, Chair
Finance
Finance – Higher Ed Subcommittee
Energy and Natural Resources
Government Oversight and Reform
Insurance and Financial Institutions

Sponsor Testimony

Senate Bill 43

March 7, 2017

Senator Kevin Bacon

Local Government, Public Safety, and Veterans Affairs Committee

Chairman Uecker, Vice-Chair Wilson, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Committee, I am pleased to sponsor Senate Bill 43 which, if passed, would permit limited home rule townships to create residential or commercial building departments even if the county in which the township is located operates its own residential and or commercial department. This change to Ohio Revised Code Chapter 504 will benefit communities by enabling residents and businesses to obtain building permits at the township level, making it more convenient for them.

This issue came to my attention after meeting with representatives of Blendon Township, which is a limited home rule township in my district. Presently, the Ohio Revised Code prevents limited home rule townships from creating their own building departments in cases where the county has already established a similar department. Limited home rule townships, like Blendon Township, are permitted to operate their own building departments if the county does not offer that service. This legislation will simply extend that privilege to limited home rule townships in cases where counties do operate their own building departments.

This bill is permissive and applies only to limited home rule townships—of which there are 32 in the state. As you may know, limited home rule townships currently exercise substantial administrative discretion, acting in some ways much like a municipality. Similar to municipal building departments, this bill will simply protect the right of a limited home rule township to

establish a building department regardless of whether the county has established a building department. In doing so, it grants additional latitude to the limited home rule township to determine if establishing a building department would be feasible and helpful for its citizens. Many, but not all, townships are equipped to successfully operate a building department and may choose to do so if permitted to do so by the Ohio Revised Code. Townships that choose not to establish their own building departments will not be affected by the change. However, other townships may benefit significantly from being able to provide building code regulation at a more immediate level. Blendon Township's commercial building department, for instance, has proven to be a significant help for both the township and for local businesses in the area. However, Blendon's ability to establish its own commercial building department is entirely contingent on the fact that Franklin County does not operate its own.

Through this legislation, limited home rule townships throughout the state will have the ability their right to establish their own building departments even if a similar department exists at the county level. In doing so, they will be able to better serve their constituents, both residential and commercial.

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on this legislation. I will be happy to answer any questions from members of the committee.