



Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee  
House Bill 291 Written Testimony  
November 13, 2018

Good morning, Chairman Uecker, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill (HB) 291.

My name is Michelle Francis and I am the Director of Government and Legal Services for the Ohio Library Council – the statewide organization representing Ohio’s 251 public library systems (including their boards of trustees and fiscal officers).

Under current law in Ohio Revised Code Section 3375.32, public library fiscal officers are required to be bonded for the “faithful performance” of their official duties as the fiscal officer. This provision was originally added to the law many years ago to protect taxpayer dollars and public entities from fraud, theft in office and other acts of employee dishonesty. At that time, one of the only options available to public entities for protection was bonds.

Sub. H.B. 291 was recently amended to allow public libraries to purchase an “employee dishonesty and faithful performance of duty policy” instead of individual surety bonds for library fiscal officers. Providing this additional option at the local level would provide some flexibility while still ensuring protections for taxpayer dollars. It would give public libraries and other local government entities the opportunity to choose what works best for them – a bond or an insurance policy.

The Ohio Library Council appreciates Rep. Wiggam adding public libraries to his legislation – the Protect Local Treasuries Act – and we support its passage. Thank you for your time and we look forward to working with you as this bill moves forward in the legislative process. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.