

Ladies and gentlemen of the committee -- my name is Travis Irvine and I am the former Libertarian candidate for Governor of Ohio. On behalf of myself, the Libertarian Party of Ohio and nearly 80,000 Ohioans who voted for me in 2018, I'm proud to stand with a multi-partisan alliance in favor of a full repeal of HB 6 and a rebuke of corruption here in Ohio's statehouse. For those reasons, I am here to testify as an opponent of the current proposed legislation HB 798, as it simply does not go far enough in addressing the corrupt nature of how HB 6 came to be. Only a full repeal of HB 6 *before the end of the year* is acceptable for the citizens of Ohio to put that corruption behind us and then we can begin to tackle the other energy policy elements addressed in HB 6 in 2021. I strongly encourage this committee and to make sure HB 6 is *not* a stain on your political records, the 133rd Ohio Assembly or this entire institution.

When the controversial nuclear bailout bill known as HB 6 first reached the Ohio House floor in 2019, only a handful of Ohioans truly knew what it was and what was in it. This "handful of Ohioans" -- as we would later find out -- was a group of lawmakers and lobbyists who had cooked up a historic pay-to-play bribery scheme, funded by various energy companies, predominantly led by FirstEnergy. Five primary suspects were charged at the end of July, including now-former speaker of the House Larry Householder, former Ohio Republican Party chairman Matt Borges and three other political operatives. It seemed like justice had been served, but not everything has been magically fixed since the historic HB 6 scandal was exposed -- more specifically, HB 6 somehow *still exists* on the books exactly as it was passed.

While I appreciate this effort by Rep. Hoops and the *affirmation* that HB 798 puts forward -- that HB6 was indeed corrupt and has major policy flaws that need to be addressed and reversed -- delaying the nuclear bailout fees for another year is just kicking the can down the road. It's been 4 months since the corruption and scandal behind HB 6 were exposed, but now you guys need another year to look through it and figure things out? It took you guys less time to approve HB 6. Did you not attempt to figure anything out then? HB 6 was fundamentally flawed from top to bottom and all of it needs to go. Not some of it. And not later. All of it needs to go before the end of the year to save face for this 133rd Assembly. Again, Rep. Hoops putting forward this bill is at least an admission that HB 6 was wrong and is an attempt to fix it, so that's why I -- like so many Ohioans -- am grateful that a hearing like this is finally being held.

And while I know that both Democrats and Republicans in this legislative body supported HB 6, it's the current Republican leadership that controls the Assembly so I'd like to address them specifically for just a moment. As a former Libertarian candidate for office myself, I've visited many of your constituents at Tea Party meetings and understand that most of the Republicans in the statehouse just get reelected no matter what, but how in the world can any of you call yourselves conservatives when a bill like HB 6 is anything but? There's nothing conservative about giving away \$130 million in Ohio taxpayer dollars a year to failing energy companies. There's nothing conservative about raising your constituents' energy bills in the middle of an unprecedented economic crisis and pandemic. There's nothing conservative about taking bribes in exchange for passing legislation. Are these things you guys want to be known for? I know most of us conservatives enjoy guns, so let me put it this way -- have you guys seen the movie *Old Yeller*? That's what we need to do to HB 6. Then if there are any specific energy policies that you liked about HB 6, it would be better to revisit those and pass *clean* legislation when the next Assembly convenes in 2021.

I understand some of you are against the renewable energy standards that HB 6 addressed -- and as a Libertarian I am also opposed to taking any money unnecessarily from taxpayers -- so I would like to also point out that conservation is conservative. All of us need to start to be a little more like Teddy Roosevelt and understand that we need to protect our environment and vital resources like clean air and water. Without those, we have nothing. Even energy companies today are starting to invest more resources in sustainable energy because it's a better investment for the future. I mean, if we're going to spend \$130 million on energy policies in Ohio a year, what's a better way to spend it? On old outdated plants that'll never be used again within a few years? Or on possible new ways of creating energy? During my first run for office for mayor of Bexley in 2007, one of the things I'll always be proud of was proposing that we build our new police station to be eco-friendly. While it cost a bit more to build at the time, it has since offset energy costs and saved taxpayer dollars in the long run. So while I understand the hesitation, it's a better investment than sending that money to a plant in Indiana.

This is why across the political spectrum, Ohioans *are* ready to see HB 6 get repealed. Thanks to the work of the FBI and individuals committed to transparency, voters are now fully aware of FirstEnergy and Larry Householder's conspiracy to siphon \$1.5 billion in Ohio taxpayer money to failing energy companies in *and* outside of the state. Ohioans deserve to have corrective action taken by their elected leaders as soon as possible, as an immediate repeal of HB 6 *on its face* is a no-brainer. For now, it's just time for both Republicans and Democrats in the statehouse to have the guts and political will to do it.

Thank you again for this opportunity -- I look forward to helping this multi-partisan alliance repeal HB 6 and take a stand against corruption in Ohio's statehouse in the weeks, months and years ahead.

Travis Irvine
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