

43rd Ohio House District

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J. Todd Smith
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Primary and Secondary Education

State and Local Government

Subcommittee on Criminal Sentencing

Commission on Minority Health

Commission on Fatherhood

Sponsor Testimony for H.B. 473

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity today to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 473.

HB473 deals with our state seals and motto and simply seeks to protect the rights of all Ohioans to proudly display both together.

Our seals and motto are treasures of our state for they in a very succinct way give expression to foundational concepts as to who we are as Ohioans. The state seal reflects Ohio's agricultural, historical and natural resources. Our motto speaks to our traditional reverence and trust in a Power above us and beyond us who can do the impossible.

Ohioans are proud of our history and excited about our future and one way we express that is in displaying our great seal and motto. Many times Ohioans display the two together.

However, the state seal is the property of the state of Ohio. The state controls all state seals by providing very specific guidelines in the Ohio Revised Code as to how the seal is to be produced, reproduced and gives details to their size and even the wording to be included on them.

There is technically no statute that allows, or to be honest that disallows, any state seal to be displayed alongside the state motto. Nevertheless, people display these together all the time as is evidenced on the ground in front of the western entrance into this very statehouse where you will find both the state seal and state motto together.

This bill is a pre-emptive and corrective measure to protect against any possible infringement upon the rights of Ohioans to proudly display these emblems in a way

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that shows their appreciation for our state, our historic traits and the traditions that have made us great.

Once again, Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for your time and I would be happy now to answer to the best of my ability any questions you may have.