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Proponent Testimony

House Bill 47

**Angela Lloyd, Executive Director of
the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation**

Chairman Schaffer, Vice Chair Lipps, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of House Bill 47. My name is Angela Lloyd, and I am the executive director of the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation.

Twenty-five years ago, the Ohio General Assembly ordered that the Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation be created to improve access to justice and ensure that Ohio's legal aid societies and other resources, programs and services exist to address the unmet civil legal needs of low-income and underserved Ohioans. The Foundation relies on the financial resources generated by Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts (IOLTA) and by the monies collected through designated civil filing fee surcharges in order to support access to justice and high quality legal aid services.

The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation has always served as Ohio's access to justice organization, although its current name does not make that clear. We are currently engaged in an array of projects to improve access to the court and the legal system for all Ohioans. Thus, we need a name that both better reflects our mission and work as well as announces to Ohio and the national community that we are engaged in the work of improving access to justice.

Additionally, national funders today, like the National Center for State Courts, the American Bar Association Foundation, and private Foundations such as Kresge, strive to fund access to justice initiatives and expect those efforts will be led by an access to justice organization within a state. The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation is that organization, and the proposed name change will help us be recognized as a leader in this space and open opportunities to bring national funding into the state.

The Ohio Legal Assistance Foundation Board, comprised of appointees from the Speaker of the Ohio House, the President of the Ohio Senate, the Governor, the Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court, the Attorney General, the Treasurer, as well as at-large leaders within the legal field, support the name change, and we are unaware of any who oppose it.

We sincerely hope that you will support our name change. Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.