

S.B. No. 103

Chairman Eklund and Vice Chair Manning, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I offer testimony on SB 103, a bill to modify Ohio's laws regarding expanding the jurisdiction of Environmental and Housing Courts. My name is Charles Schulman and I come before you today as a former President and representative of both the Northern Ohio Apartment Association which on its own represents owners and residents of 160,000 apartment units and as a former President and member of the Ohio Apartment Association and as a third generation investor and manager of real estate having been in the business for the past 41 years.

During that time, I have also acted as an expert on many occasions for legal cases relative to the property management industry and have served frequently as a Receiver on behalf of the Courts. My personal investments have been in Greater Cleveland, throughout Columbus and Lancaster and in suburban Cincinnati. I have experience in the Courts in each community as well as in other areas of the State of Ohio as Receiver and across the United States as an expert.

Having given the Housing or Environmental division of the municipal court jurisdiction over violations of the local building, housing, air pollution, sanitation, health, fire, zoning, or safety code, ordinance or regulation is always in the best interest of both the residents and the property owners. Having a court that is familiar and aware of the issues that may affect the safe and habitable use of the properties and is well versed and understanding of the laws and ordinances allows for swifter and fairer treatment of those involved as well as streamlines the process which either enforces or vindicates those involved.

Granting the Housing Division of the Cleveland Municipal Court the concurrent jurisdiction with the court of common pleas over criminal actions or proceedings related to pollution is again in the best interest of the residents, the property owners and the properties. In example, in certain areas the problems with tire dumping, garbage dumping and other felonies that create a bad environment for children and seniors has become a danger and a blight. The knowledge and experience offered by a court that is charged with handling housing and building related charges uniquely qualifies them to

adjudicate such criminal cases and to better understand the short and long term ramifications of the charges involved.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you.