



House Finance Committee
Proponent Written Testimony for House Bill 237
March 15, 2022

Beth Wanless,
Ohio REALTORS® Director of Government Affairs

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Sweeney, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 237.

Formed in 1910, Ohio REALTORS® is the state's largest professional trade organization with more than 36,000 members representing both residential and commercial practitioners, as well as auctioneers and appraisers. We also represent homeowners, homebuyers, and fight to protect private property rights across Ohio.

Historically, our organization has opposed fees, taxes or surcharges that increase the cost of homeownership, no matter how small the cost may be. However, today we are diverting from past positions to support the passage of HB 237, a bill that would require counties to digitize important documents related to the transfer of real property. Ohio REALTORS appreciates the attention to put recording instruments related to the conveyance of real property online in all 88 counties by January 1, 2024.

If the COVID-19 pandemic shed light on anything, it is that functioning online systems are more critical than ever. In 2020, the Ohio legislature wisely required county offices to remain open to the public and operational during the COVID stay at home order to continue allowing the transfer of real property. By creating an online system to record and access documents, future efforts to view these documents will be safer, faster, and easier.

We are grateful to the House State and Local Government Committee Chair Wiggam, bill sponsor Representative Hillyer and members of the committee for being mindful of the rising costs of homeownership, and for carefully considering any fees, taxes, or surcharges that may make it more difficult for Ohioans to achieve the American Dream of homeownership. Ohio is still affordable in regard to housing despite a strong market, and we take seriously the responsibility to keep costs down when purchasing real property. We supported the amendment to reduce the document preservation surcharge from \$10 to \$5 as the bill moved through committee. Again, although we oppose any type of increase on homeownership, no matter how small it may seem, we are appreciative of the reduction in the document preservation surcharge, and we write in support of House Bill 237.



Seth Task, CRS, GREEN, 2021 President • **Scott R. Williams**, CEO
200 E. Town St. • Columbus, OH 43215-4648

P 614.228.6675 • F 614.228.2601 • info@ohiorealtors.org • www.ohiorealtors.org





In addition to supporting House Bill 237, Ohio REALTORS® support a minor amendment to clarify Section 5323.02 that would allow a rental unit owner’s agent or representative to register a rental property with the County Auditor per 5323.02. Current statute only allows a rental unit owner to register their property when required by the County Auditor. The amendment would extend this permission to an owner’s agent or representative consistent with ORC Section 5323.03 regarding an out-of-state rental unit owner.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments, and respectfully ask the House Finance Committee to support House Bill 237.