



Proponent Testimony: House Bill 237

Cory Fleming

Vice President of Business Development, Superior Financial Solutions

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer and Ranking Member Sweeney, my name is Cory Fleming, and I am the Vice President of Business Development for Superior Financial Solutions. Thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony for House Bill 237, which would require and assist county recorders with moving recorded documents to a virtual platform by January 1, 2024.

For context, Superior Financial Solutions is a wholly owned subsidiary of Superior Credit Union, headquartered in Lima, OH. We are a multi-faceted residential real estate company that manages a real estate brokerage, property/casualty insurance business and mortgage team. Our parent company, Superior Credit Union, also has ownership stake in two separate title companies.

As part of our plan to make obtaining real estate less burdensome for consumers, we have established policies and procedures that allow us to originate, process and close residential real estate loans virtually.

A major help to these efforts was the enactment of Senate Bill 263 in the 132nd General Assembly, which removed the requirement that real estate documents be notarized by an in-person notary. From our understanding, we are one of the first financial institutions in the country to have successfully closed a 1st mortgage using our remote online notary (RON) technology.

By moving to a virtual operation, we are saving consumers time and money. A few of the specific benefits we have seen or heard from consumers include:

- Parents can schedule a closing after putting their kids to bed, rather than having to find time during the workday.
- Individuals who have COVID-19 or other cold like symptoms can still close their loan without being a risk to others.
- Snowbirds do not have to travel back to Ohio to close on their loan.

The **biggest** challenge we face with moving to a fully virtual operation is that at least half the counties in Ohio are unable to receive and upload mortgage documents electronically. This causes us issues with title insurance providers, secondary market investors, etc. which makes the remote process non practical.

We commend Rep. Hillyer for working with the Recorder's Association to develop a plan to help those who need assistance with the virtual transition. House Bill 237 provides a \$10 million appropriation from the general revenue fund (GRF) and grants recorders the ability to enact a \$5 surcharge for document preservation. The legislation also includes other fee increases, which we believe are reasonable to cover vendor management, servicing costs, etc.

In summary, House Bill 237 is a good piece of legislation that will benefit Ohio consumers by making government more accessible through technological modernization. Thank you for allowing me to testify and I am happy to answer any questions.