



**Finance Committee
House Bill 666 Sponsor Testimony
Representatives Thomas West & Catherine Ingram
Legislation to Create a Rent Rebate Pilot Program**

November 30th, 2022

Thank you Chair Oelslager, Vice-Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Sweeney, and all members of the Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding House Bill 666.

House Bill 666 establishes the Rent Rebate Pilot Program to provide rent rebates to certain low-income elderly, widowed, or disabled persons. This will authorize rebates of up to \$650 per claim, depending on the claimant's household income and total rent paid during the preceding calendar year. In doing so, we protect underrepresented and vulnerable communities from homelessness

This rebate will help Ohioans who are at least 65 years old, at least 50 years old and a widow or widower who has not remarried, and at least 18 years old and permanently disabled. The bill appropriates \$100 million for the Fiscal Year 2022- Fiscal Year 2023 biennium for rebate payments under the program, and the Department of Commerce will be tasked to administer the program.

This bill will permit one rebate per year for each residential rental property. \$650 may not mean a whole lot to every family in Ohio but to these individuals, it could be the difference of paying an essential bill, or putting food on the table, or having a savings to rely on. We can all agree that our most vulnerable populations should not face excruciating financial burdens, and it is our duty to ensure they are not taken advantage of by our housing system.

While H.B. 666 is only the beginning of what we should do to provide rental relief, it is critical that we start to take action now to provide assistance to vulnerable populations in Ohio. Therefore, we urge support for H.B. 666. Thank you again for your time, and we are happy to answer any questions regarding this legislation.