

Sponsor Testimony, HB 644

Representative Fraizer

Representative John

Thank you Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, and Ranking Member Sweeney for the opportunity to talk to you today about HB 644 – Ohio Disability Home Expense Grant Program. During our time here in the Statehouse, we have heard from various organizations and constituents about accessibility needs, the positive aspects of aging in place, and the need to support disabled Ohioans as housing prices and expenses continue to rise.

In the previous GA, HB 498 was introduced, which was a disability tax credit with a similar goal, to assist the disabled and elderly to improve their homes and age in place. Many of the aspects of the bill remains the same of creating a program geared at assisting the elderly and disabled to fix their residence and improve their lives, and will remain administered by the Department of Aging. We have made some modifications, including leveraging ARPA Dollars to remove the Tax Credit and increase the allocation while directly servicing critical groups. Here are some highlights of how the program is structured and how groups will be able to leverage expanded support.

There are three groups listed in the bill that qualify for the Ohio, besides being an Ohio Resident:

- Over 60 Years Old
- Documented Permanent Disability
- ALS or MS Diagnosis

A \$25 Million Grant will be established in the Department of Aging, with a \$6 Million minimum reserved for ALS and MS patients. We also encourage partnership with non-profit organizations, like the ALS Association of Ohio, that have existing programs to assist Ohioans with a \$1,000 grant with expenses. This program will allow disabled, older, and ALS/ MS patients have access to a \$5,000 grant to improve their lives, expand existing non-profit programs, and improve the quality of life to those who truly need support.

Thank you Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, and Ranking Member Sweeney for the opportunity to speak today about helping these Ohioans live their lives in the comfort with the help of the Ohio Home Expense Grant Program, and we would be happy to take any questions.