



**Representative Jim Hoops
81st House District**

Thursday, February 11, 2021

Chairman Shane Wilkin
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Rep. Jim Hoops Sponsor Testimony-House Bill 43

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Sweeny, and members of the Ohio House Government Oversight Committee thank you for the opportunity for me and Representative Sobeki to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 43.

HB 43 would allow a public body to meet and hold hearings via teleconference or video conference in a safe and transparent way.

For many years people felt and I was one of them that you had to be physically present to hold a meeting where you would discuss important topics and decide on a direction by a vote of the body that was physically present at the meeting. The public also had an opportunity to participate by attending the meeting and expressing their views on a certain topic.

However, since going through the COVID-19 pandemic and due to improvements in technology we have found a way to hold public meetings via teleconference or video conference in a transparent way. In fact last year the

133rd General Assembly allowed through legislation the option for a public body to hold a public meeting via teleconference or video conference and I feel it has gone very well.

HB 43 will allow public input and transparency during a meeting and it gives the public body another option to make sure a quorum is present to conduct business.

In fact I became interested in this legislation last year when a good friend of mine and a friend of many of you former State Representative Tim Brown came to me and explained the challenges of bringing a quorum together to even have an official meeting where they could vote on policies. Tim is the Executive Director of TMACOG which has a board made up of 44 elected individuals that includes county, township, city and village officials.

Tim told me “while hopeful we will have permanent permissive authority going forward, we would use it sparingly. I do not envision using it all the time. Our members like to get together, just not all the time. It makes sense for us to have some of our meetings in the future remote especially during the winter months, or cold or flu season.”

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to testify on this piece of legislation that adds additional options for public bodies to conduct meetings in a safe and transparent way. I along with Representative Sobecki would be happy to answer any questions.