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Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee; thank you for allowing our office to submit written testimony for House Bill 214.

This bill emphasizes what we each strive for from the very moment we step foot into public service; that we serve with the utmost integrity and uphold our offices with distinction and transparency. Our constituents send us to Columbus to serve and honor them. It is not a right that we are afforded, but instead a privilege that requires us to act in *their* best interests, not our own.

House Bill 214 is a reflection of these values; when one of our members engages in misconduct that causes Ohioans to question the integrity of this institution, we should do everything in our powers to reprimand that member and to show Ohioans what it means to truly serve them. Failing to act would be a disservice to the very people who elected us into office.

This House Bill would prohibit any member indicted for a public corruption offense from taking office as a General Assembly member, as well as withholding their salary and employment benefits. Taxpayers should not have to foot the bill for any public servant acting unfaithfully to their constituents and to our great state.

Under HB 214, a “public corruption offense” would be defined as one of the following infractions:

- Extortion, bribery, theft in office, engaging in a corrupt activity, and intimidation of a public servant, party official, or witness while in the performance of the person’s duty;
- Obstructing official business or having an unlawful interest in a public contract if charged as a felony;
- Felony conspiracy, felony attempt, or felony complicity with respect to any of the offenses listed above; or
- A felony violation of a law of any other state or the United States that is substantially equivalent to any of the above offenses.

With how recent we have seen corrupt politicians operate and erode public trust within our Statehouse, HB 214 is just the start in addressing the ethical concerns that many Ohioans have. We should make it clear that are acting and passing legislation with public service in mind, and that begins with accountability from the inside.

We thank you for your time; please reach out to our office should you have any questions regarding this legislation.