



## Advocates for Ohio's Future

House Bill 251 Proponent Testimony  
House Health Committee  
February 8, 2022

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the House Health Committee, my name is Kelsey Bergfeld and I am the Director of Advocates for Ohio's Future (AOF). Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on House Bill 251, which would require the Director of Health to establish an indoor mold program.

AOF is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of over 500 state and local health and human services policy, advocacy and provider organizations that strive to strengthen families and communities through public funding for health, human services, and early care & education. We work to empower and support nonprofit organizations in the critical work they do, especially as it relates to lifting up the most vulnerable among us.

Mold exposure can cause a plethora of health issues, which can make diagnosis more difficult. Possible symptoms include allergic reactions, coughing, sore throat, burning eyes, skin rash, asthma episodes, and can cause serious and life-threatening symptoms in immunocompromised patients. There is little data on the impact of mold on Ohioans and families. There are only estimates regarding the number of homes in Ohio with toxic mold or the number of Ohioans experiencing health issues from exposure. There are also no federal or state regulations on thresholds for unsafe levels of mold in homes and residences.

Throughout the pandemic, Ohioans have sought refuge from COVID-19 exposure by staying home. To make homes a true, safe refuge, more Ohioans need to be aware of the presence and dangers of mold and have access to trusted resources on where to turn to remediate mold and increase the safety of their homes. House Bill 251 takes some vital first steps towards protecting Ohioans from mold by requiring the Director of the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to establish a mold information and awareness campaign. As part of this program, enhanced disclosure of mold in commercial or industrial properties to buyers, renters and tenants will be required, and ODH will be required to review technology and techniques for mold remediation every five years.

AOF advocates for policies that support healthy children and families and address the social determinants of health, of which housing is a major contributor. HB 251 will lay the groundwork for future policies and programming to address mold in Ohio homes and begin to elevate mold to the level of radon and lead-based paint - as a public health risk that cannot be ignored. AOF asks the General Assembly to support HB 251 to protect the health of Ohioans and their families.

**Advocates for Ohio's Future**  
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