

To: Chairman Lipps
Vice Chair Holmes
Ranking Member Russo
Members of the Ohio House Health Committee

From: Michael Luh
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Date: February 6, 2022

Subject: **Support of H.B. 251, the Ohio Indoor Safe Air Act**

Members Lipps, Holmes, Russo and other members of the Ohio House Health Committee,

I am an avid supporter of H.B. 251, The Ohio Indoor Safe Air Act. As a long-time resident of Ohio, I've lived in Cincinnati and Columbus. Mold is not only a dangerous and toxic substance to our lives, but also an extremely costly one too. My family has been dealing with toxic mold for over a decade. It has haunted us from our home in Cincinnati, to a long term stay hotel, to an apartment in Columbus to dorm rooms and various apartments in Cincinnati, Columbus, Oxford, and Oberlin, and now at our current house in Columbus. The costs and turmoil of having to evacuate and break leases due to mold, has been traumatizing to the family as well as incredibly expensive.

My wife and 3 daughters have all had negative consequences due to mold that will affect them for the rest of their lives. Our first inkling for a problem was in our Cincinnati home. Due to poor construction from an AC drain, we had a hidden toxic mold issue that wasn't made apparent until one of my daughters fell ill. Even then, it took us months to identify the cause. Once we identified the core issue, we had to evacuate the house, live in a hotel for several years while we remediated the house and every item that we owned and wanted to keep. The financial impact for this one incident exceeded \$250,000 in just home remediation, cleaning, accommodations, mold testing and reconstruction. This cost doesn't include the medical costs of sending the 4 women to a mold specialist physician in California (one of 2 specialist in the country at the time) for 3 months to try to improve their health and learn to manage the health issues caused by mold. The impact to our children's physical and mental health is still apparent today. The toxic molds perforated the large intestines and created lasting food intolerances that ranges from gluten, corn (and all corn-based additives), garlic, lettuce, avocados, dairy, and eggs. One daughter missed a year of school due to her mold exposure. We are in the process of renovating another home to make it as mold resistant as possible. The steps we have had to take include replacement of all of the HVAC and duct systems with two HEPA HVAC units, replacing all of the drywall with mold resistant fiberglass board, extreme measures for water management in the entire house (plumbing, gutters, roof, land scaping, ...). The primary purpose of remodeling is for mold maintenance. So far we have spent in excess of \$300,000 to limit possible sources of mold growth.

Most of that money we will never get back when we sell our house. This investment is just so that my family will have a safe place to live.

What does our future look like? My daughters will spend the rest of their lives having to choose their living accommodations based on how moldy the apartment or house might be. Each of them will spend thousands of dollars in mold testing only to find that most apartments and homes have a mold issue and they can't live in them (The EPA approved ERMI test is about \$500/test). They will need to quit jobs because their work building has mold problems. They will leave movie theaters that are too moldy for them to go to without feeling ill for weeks afterwards. They will have friend's houses they can't go in because of the mold. There are some restaurants they won't be able to dine at because of poor mold remediation. They will choose (and have chosen) their colleges based on the mold load of most building at the university. Their lives will always be severely limited based on the mold situation. My children will live with HEPA air cleaners running constantly in their bedrooms, industrial HEPA air scrubbers in the basements of their houses, dehumidifiers running 24/7, a constant vigil to every water spill, dripping faucet, leaky pipe, roof leaks, condensation, ... Like soldiers returning from war, our family has been traumatized with a mold version of PTSD. The stress of hyper awareness of mold will shorten their lives and reduce the quality of their lives.

Approval of H.B. 251 will be a starting point in improving their future a little. The disclosures will help the process of finding places to live. Ultimately some standards and oversight for remediation will need to be required in order to reduce the number of mold scammers and poor-quality mold service. It's too late for my children and my wife to ever stop reacting to mold, but H.B 251 is a step towards preventing other families from going through what we have experienced with toxic mold.