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Ohio Legislative Black Caucus
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HOUSE ASSISTANT MINORITY LEADER THOMAS E. WEST

State Representative | Ohio House District 49

Chair Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Liston, and all members of the House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding House Bill 608.

House Bill 608 is an incredible piece of legislation that will improve the health of Ohioans by increasing access to lifesaving biomarker testing. This bill will require all health insurance and Medicaid plans to cover these types of genetic testing, thus providing critical health information that will prolong life, proactively fight off diseases, and keep Ohioans with their family, friends, and communities for as long as possible.

The financial strain of these new types of science and technology should not inhibit any Ohioan from the benefits of biomarker testing. Any person who seeks this testing should be able to receive it, and House Bill 608 provides an avenue for access to care, treatment, and recovery. Undoubtedly, this bill will save many lives by allowing patients to get the right treatment as soon as possible, and wealth will no longer be a determining factor for health in Ohio.

Biomarker testing provides financial, social, and emotional benefits to Ohioans. By improving access to these types of testing, we will decrease medical costs by catching illnesses before onset, shorten time away from work, and avoid expensive and ineffective testing or treatments. Most importantly, by understanding one's susceptibility to sickness, Ohioans can reduce pain and suffering for themselves and their loved ones. After two years of watching our great state fall prey to illness, it is critical that we take action to do whatever necessary to ensure the health and wellness of all Ohioans, so I urge that you pass H.B. 608. Thank you again for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas E. West".

State Representative Thomas West
Ohio House District 49