

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking member Kelly, and members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Yiwei Cheng and I am from Cincinnati, OH. Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of HB 563.

I moved to Cincinnati, Ohio 3.5 years ago for work and stumbled on short term rentals because at the time, I had months left on an apartment lease I could not get out of and a mortgage on a house that we just bought. During that time period, it helped me avoid the double payments. Now, with no corporate job, I still depend on income from renting out my home to pay for the mortgage and other expenses. I am lucky to be in the City of Cincinnati, where short term rentals are allowed, but there are other areas in the Greater Cincinnati area that do not. This huge variance in just a 50 mile radius shows why HB 563 should be passed. Local governments need high level guidance related to short term rentals.

I'm sure you all know the obvious reasons why short-term rentals should not be banned. It's good for the community and good for the economy. Ohio has always been known to support small businesses and rights for its people. HB 563 stands for that.

- Supporting short term rentals means you are supporting small businesses and the local economy. Short term/vacation rental is a \$87 billion industry. This is not a new concept but Airbnb made it more accessible for anyone to do it.
- Based on data from Airbnb & VRBO, ~40% of the owners just have 1 property. ~46%, almost half, of hosts are women. By supporting short term rentals, you are supporting the mom next door who need the additional income to support her kids or while finishing school.
- Another ~40% have between 2-20 listings. In total ~75-80% of hosts are local small businesses in the area. By hosting and operating short term rentals, the hosts partner with local restaurants, breweries, tours, or events. They are supporting the hospitality industry that is still recovering from COVID 19. Supporting short term rentals means you are supporting small cleaning businesses who depend on the hosts for their income.
- Hotels and short-term rentals can co-exist. Local governments should not make decisions for travelers on where to stay or make decisions for homeowners on how long they can rent their house for.

Just like we all have options on where to shop, whether it's only from Amazon, in store at Kroger, or in bulk at Costco, travelers should have option on where to stay. Taking away the only alternative will only hurt local businesses as travelers' habits have changed from COVID. I ask you think about how you and your family like to travel? Would you want to stay in a hotel room or an entire home with a kitchen for the same price? Banning short term rentals is like banning online orders or food delivery apps like DoorDash, making everyone go to the store or restaurant. Banning short term rentals is like banning Lyft or Uber.

Banning short term rentals is taking an option away from travelers, telling them that they cannot stay in a home in this area even though the owner is willing.

Passing HB 563 will prevent local governments from arbitrarily making decisions for homeowners on how to use their home.

In the last year, my partner and I bought a house in Symmes Township, between Loveland and Mason, to rent out. The zoning code has not been changed for years, and there is nothing in the code regulating rentals. However, I received a citation that my furnished rental for short term and mid term stays is required to have a conditional use permit based on the township's interpretation of the zoning code that short term rentals is considered a "bed and breakfast". Per the document provided, you can see that the Township Administrator recognizes that short term rentals do not meet the definition of a "bed and breakfast". With this interpretation, this is the township's way of "regulating" short term rentals. As I went through to appeal this interpretation at the township's board of appeals, they agreed unanimously that short term rentals do not fit into the definition of a "bed and breakfast", and "hotels" would be a better fit instead. As of today, short term rentals are now considered "hotels" in Symmes Township. As a result, I will now have to appeal to Hamilton County Court of Appeals relating to this interpretation and why there is a discrimination of long term and short term rentals.

There are and will be more in similar situations.

Passing HB 563 will level the playing field and be a starting point for all localities to regulate or legislate properly. With no guidance from the state government, local municipalities arbitrarily make decisions or try to legislate through the board of appeals as they did in my case, or other ways that frankly make no legal sense. Passing HB 563 will not take away the locality's sovereignty; it just gives them guidance and direction on how to regulate or legislate if they wish.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to testify in support of HB 563. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.