



Testimony in Support of HB 567
Senate Judiciary Committee
December 6, 2022

Good afternoon, Chairman Manning, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and all other members on the Judiciary Committee. My name is Jedidiah Bressman. I am an attorney at Bressman Law and I have the honor of testifying on behalf of the Ohio Association for Justice. OAJ's mission is to support Ohioans' Seventh Amendment right to a civil trial by jury.

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in favor of House Bill 567 which requires that the Clerk of the Court of Common Pleas to make the court's general civil docket available for viewing online, and printing, from the Clerk's website.

Open access to public records is a cornerstone of American democracy. Such access is central to electing and monitoring public officials and evaluating government operations. Having a public online docket allows Ohioans to read court documents of interest. And, by allowing online access to Court documents, we allow the public to become more informed about our court system and the decisions our judges make.

As a practicing litigation attorney, it is important for my clients to be able to view court documents for their cases. By having an online docketing system, my clients can readily access their own case without the need to get in contact with me to do so. If I am in trial, with another client, or just unavailable my client can go to the docket to see what has been done. This also makes the attorney more accountable. If our clients have access to the online docket, they can

see what we are doing in their cases. This not only ensures transparency, but it also enhances the ability of my clients to “trust, but verify” that I am doing the work they have asked of me.

I have a couple suggestions that I think would be beneficial for the bill and for Ohioans. First, the legislation only applies to cases that are filed after the effective date of the statute. However, the bill gives clerk of courts 18 months to get this up and running. I suggest that the dates should coincide that the cases filed once the system is up and running should be available for the court review. Additionally, the bill should include a section that gives the clerks the opportunity to put other cases on the online docket. For instance, if I file a case the day before the statute is implemented, my client will not be able to see their case. If I waited one more day, which could be impossible based on the particular statute of limitations, it would appear on the online docket.

Finally, with the online docket, it seems that it would be good to coincide e-filing with the online docket. Each individual county has their own way of e-filing which is sometimes difficult to navigate, but if they have e-filing it at least saves the cost and the potential delays that come with mail filing.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to take any question from the committee.