

Chair Gavarone, Vice-Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath, and members of the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee,

My name is Mryia Williams and I am a solar homeowner. Thank you for the opportunity to offer my proponent testimony on Senate Bill 61. Senator Blessing and Senator Antonio have presented a common-sense piece of legislation that will help to ensure all Ohioans' property rights are more equally protected.

As I approach the first anniversary of my own home solar installation, I wanted to take a moment to share with you my personal experience with going solar. Before approaching businesses for bids on our proposed solar installations, my husband and I completed a fair amount of research and knew that our south-facing one story home would be a good candidate for solar but in our reading, we had also noticed information about some Homeowners Associations (HOAs) not allowing solar panels within street view. I didn't want to waste time and resources of a business if the installation would be limited by my HOA to the northern facing rear of my home where it would be inefficient and economically unviable so I approached the property management company which services my Homeowners Association before we engaged installers.

After an initial discussion about why we would need our solar installation to be on the street side of our home, I found my HOA to have very accommodating guidelines including needing the system to be professionally installed and having a panel color similar to typical roofing colors. I understand why our HOA would want to have consistency and quality in the appearance of the homes in the community, especially considering that our existing community bylaws have rules about exterior modifications and what materials can be used.

When we started to collect bids, my husband and I prioritized local companies over nationally based ones. We know that by supporting locally owned businesses, we are benefiting our local area by investing economically and helping create jobs because local businesses care about the well-being of our community the same way we do. The installer we worked with, Ohio Power Solutions, is a family-owned company from London, Ohio. My installation provided good-paying jobs for hard-working Ohioans and beyond the installation jobs, there are inspectors, monitoring companies, maintenance companies, and more that rely on Senate Bill 61 to stop HOAs from imposing unfair restrictions on homeowners. Now as I walk around my housing complex, I see that we are one of four homes that have gone solar.

I have 42 panels with 18 facing south on the front of my home and 12 each on both the east and west sides of my attached garage. Since it is a sizable installation, it has opened up several conversations with neighbors as well as friends, family, and acquaintances. I have been surprised by the number of them who are interested in adding panels to their homes as well. They have a variety of reasons for desiring panels from energy cost stability to wanting to have power during outages, while others mention reducing their carbon footprint or increasing their property value while offsetting a monthly power bill. As the conversations progress, some of them bring up that they aren't able to go solar because of their HOA. Senate Bill 61 will help those homeowners have an equal opportunity to have rooftop solar installed and not have their system blocked by cumbersome rules.

I appreciate your efforts to help these Ohioans and look forward to seeing you move Senate Bill 61 to a full Senate vote so we will be one step closer to solar being more obtainable by a broader range of Ohio homeowners.

Thank you for this opportunity to present my proponent testimony for Senate Bill 61.

Mryia Williams  
A homeowner with rooftop solar