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**HB 501 Township Omnibus
Proponent Testimony
December 6, 2022
Senate Local Government and Elections Committee**

Chairman Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath, and esteemed members of the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee. My name is Tom Shay, and I am the Fiscal Officer of Braceville Township in Trumbull County. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of House Bill 501, which seeks to modify and revise Township Laws in the State of Ohio.

I am writing to ask for support for an amendment that was in the As Introduced version of HB 501. Particularly, I am seeking language that would allow townships to establish a Township Preservation Commission.

As you may be aware, townships only have the powers outlined in the Ohio Revised Code, and any updates to their authority or manner of operations must be made legislatively. Currently no language exists that allows township to create a Township Preservation Commission to encourage the preservation of historic properties within the unincorporated area of a township. Municipalities currently have the authority to establish these commissions under their home rule authority.

With this additional authority, townships would be able to become a Certified Local Government (CLG) through the Ohio History Connection. CLGs are eligible for federal grants to help carry out historic preservation activities. This change would give townships access to those grants as well.

Within Trumbull County there are two specific townships that work to preserve historic areas in their townships. Brookfield Township established an architectural review board several years ago to preserve their historic green within the center of their township. Additionally, Bristol Township has been working on creating a historic district in their downtown which includes several properties owned by the township. Both townships, while successful in maintaining the integrity of the areas, are not currently able to seek federal grant money through the Certified Local Government Program.

I believe that HB 501 is good for Ohio. It seeks to modify and revise sections of the statutes to make township life better for the residents in which I serve and improves township life in all Ohio's Townships. HB 501 would be even better if it contained language that would allow townships to create a Township Preservation Commission. I would like to thank Representative Hall for addressing these issues. Thank you for this opportunity and for your consideration.

Most Respectfully,

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