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House Civil Justice Committee, Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 305
November 8th, 2023

Thank you Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee for hearing sponsor testimony today regarding HB 305, a bill that, if passed into law, will help to streamline and modernize judicial processes throughout Ohio.

The internet is used to do virtually all other types of business in Ohio, and residents should be permitted to utilize this technology in our justice system as well. E-filing reduces litigation costs for individuals and businesses alike who have matters before the Court and is a reasonable service that government should make available to our taxpayers. This e-filing legislation builds on the successful passage of our HB567 in the 134th General Assembly, which required all Common Pleas Court case filings to be viewable online and passed unanimously in both the House and the Senate.

HB 305 will require the Clerks of Court of Common Pleas and Municipal Courts to permit e-filing within nine months after the effective date of this legislation. It also clarifies that our Clerks of Court who maintain these electronic systems have the sole authority to spend their funds to modernize them in the normal course of their duties. Additionally, while the Clerks of Court for the Common Pleas Courts have been authorized to charge a \$20 computerization fee for many years, our Municipal Court clerks have been inexplicably capped at a \$10 fee for the same purposes. This bill provides parity by also allowing Municipal Court Clerks to also charge up to \$20 for new case filings, ensuring that all offices have the funds necessary to implement these systems without the need for any additional appropriations by the Ohio General Assembly.

We are grateful to the Ohio Clerk of Courts Association and the Ohio Municipal Clerk of Courts Association, who have worked with us on this bill. HB 305 will create a more accurate form of court processing, all while being faster and cheaper. E-Filing is not a new concept, but a concept whose time has come to be fully adopted. We want to thank you all for listening, and will attempt to answer any questions you may have.