

Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Galonski, and Honorable Members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today.

I stand before you today as a retired investigator with 31 years of service in my county prosecutor's office. Throughout my career, I have witnessed the evolution of legal processes, and I am here to lend my support to House Bill 305, which advocates for the electronic filing of pleadings in common pleas, municipal, and county courts.

In the realm of criminal justice, efficiency is paramount. The requirement for the clerk of a common pleas court to explore the feasibility of electronic filing through email or online platforms is a crucial step forward. This not only streamlines the filing process but also reflects a commitment to embracing technology to enhance our legal system. As someone who has navigated the intricate web of paperwork in the pursuit of justice, I can attest to the transformative impact this shift can have on the speed and accuracy of legal proceedings.

Further, the prohibition on excessive fees for electronic filings is commendable. It ensures that the financial burden on those seeking justice is not exacerbated by unreasonable charges. This provision aligns with the principles of fairness and accessibility that underpin our legal system.

Allow me to draw attention to an additional point that resonates with the safety of our communities in Ohio. The requirement for physical delivery of filings poses a potential risk. In my experience, delays caused by the manual handling of paperwork dilute our workforce, potentially jeopardizing public safety. Embracing electronic filing not only accelerates the legal process but also contributes to an environment where timely decisions can be made, enhancing the overall security of our state.

Moreover, the removal of the requirement for court authorization to disburse funds for computerization is a sensible step. Empowering clerks to manage these resources efficiently allows for a more agile response to the evolving technological landscape. We elect clerks of courts independently from our local judges, and they should have the ability to update and oversee their offices.

In conclusion, House Bill 305 represents a common-sense stride towards a more efficient and secure legal system. As a retiree who has dedicated their life to upholding the principles of justice, I wholeheartedly support this bill and urge the esteemed members of the committee to do the same.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Scott Male