



**STATEMENT OF THE OHIO STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 305**

Before the House Civil Justice Committee
Representative Brett Hillyer, Chair

Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee: On behalf of the Ohio State Bar Association (“OSBA”), I am pleased to offer proponent testimony in support of House Bill 305.

House Bill 305 allows for the electronic filing of pleadings or documents in courts of common pleas, municipal courts, and county courts (with the exception of probate and juvenile courts). House Bill 305 builds upon the improvements made in House Bill 567 from the last General Assembly, which required that courts of common pleas make their civil dockets and relevant case files available for viewing online and was also supported by the Ohio Bar.

While the number of courts offering electronic filing has increased, it is still not widely available across the state. The Supreme Court of Ohio’s iCourt Task Force considered this point and recommended that courts should expand their use of electronic filing. According to the iCourt Survey, approximately one-third of court administrators and clerks responded that e-filing was offered to attorneys and less than 20 percent reported electronic filing was available for self-represented litigants (as of 2021).

The Ohio Bar believes the changes in House Bill 305 will increase efficiency in our courts and provide consistency across the state in how legal professions and individuals are able to access our justice system. Electronic filing offers a more convenient way for attorneys and parties to file documents and eliminates the extra time and transportation costs of filing documents at the courthouse.

While the Ohio Bar is supportive of the efficiencies created by this change, we are also cautious of the burden to courts in making these updates. Therefore, we also support the modest increase in allowable fees to cover computerization costs. We encourage the General Assembly to ensure this transition is not overly burdensome on our courts.

Overall, House Bill 305 makes our legal system more efficient and removes barriers to access. Ohio citizens will be better served as a result of this flexibility, and we appreciate the bill sponsors’ efforts on these updates.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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