



Ohio House Bill 466
Zillow Proponent Testimony
Ohio Civil Justice Committee
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Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn and members of the Civil Justice Committee, on behalf of Zillow, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 466, which provides consumers with important protections and disclosures throughout their home buying and selling journey. We appreciate Representatives Schmidt and Brennan for introducing this legislation, especially at such an important time in the real estate industry.

At Zillow, we believe information is power – in fact, our company was founded to bring transparency to the real estate process. Empowering consumers with information enables them to make informed decisions about buying or selling a home – the largest financial transaction most Americans will ever undertake. Underpinning this value is the belief that consumers deserve transparency and choice as they make important decisions around real estate agent representation and compensation.

House Bill 466 requires that all Ohio home shoppers have access to crucial information when choosing which real estate agent to partner with, including important disclosures to ensure they are informed of potential conflicts of interest and the terms of real estate agent compensation. We strongly support the timing requirement in the bill for entering into a written buyer's agency agreement. Prior to entering such an agreement, a customer should have ample time to meet with various real estate agents, ask questions, tour properties, and most importantly have the privacy and time to review the contracts and understand exactly what they are signing.

All of the costs of the real estate transaction, including real estate agent fees and compensation, should be transparent to consumers. Empowering consumers by clearly disclosing the compensation to be paid to an agent provides the opportunity for consumers to freely negotiate that compensation. Having a buyer's agency disclosure presented to the customer and executed will provide them the knowledge and transparency that is imperative in such a massive financial decision.

Consumers are best served when they are able to make informed choices on the best professionals to represent them. We strongly believe in the value of an independent buyer's agent to help consumers navigate one of the most important transactions they make in a lifetime. We also believe that consumers should understand their option to be represented by their own agent and the tradeoffs of choosing not to work with one. Dual agency rarely meets the best interests of both parties, and consumers should be able to make an *informed* choice on whether to have independent representation by a buyer's agent.

The disclosures required by this bill are crucial tools to ensure Ohio consumers have the information they need to make informed decisions. We thank you for your consideration of House Bill 466, important pro-consumer legislation and we respectfully encourage your support.