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**State Representative House District 53**

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member McNally, and members of the Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer joint sponsor testimony on House Bill 282.

Our bill seeks to point out the dangers and effects that toxic mold can have on children and parents when undetected in a home. I believe that when vital information that is literally life and death is not readily available, we are doing a disservice to those we wish to serve.

This idea was brought to me by a constituent, Brandon Chappo, who was living in a home that turned out to be infested with mold without his knowledge. After careful research and thoughtful discussion, we believed it was time that the state of Ohio took these dangers seriously. Brandon has suffered from the damage that was done to him for the lack of knowledge pertaining to the mold he encountered, and he has made it his mission to see that this type of harm doesn't happen to others.

Ohio is an old state with old homes. Many homes that were built years ago are still being resided in by Ohioans who are susceptible to mold. Our children deserve to live and go to school in mold-free environments and research has shown that they are the most likely to be affected when inhaling, over long periods of time, mold toxins. The neurocognitive effects at such a young age are an unfortunate truth that many of our children are experiencing. Other effects include respiratory diseases such as asthma along with gastrointestinal, cancers, infertility, fatigue and other forms of cognitive impairment.

Many will think that we are looking to place a burden on law-abiding and well-intentioned homeowners and renters, but in fact we only wish to spread education across our state as this information is not universally known. We want to be sure that the dangers of mold are as publicized as the past lead and radon campaigns.

As stated before, this information is not common knowledge to many people. I, personally, owned a rental and found that there was water damage and potentially mold growing. I believe many homeowners face the similar situation that I was in and express, “What do I do to fix this?” We want to help them for their property’s sake, the potential renters and for their own personal benefit as an owner. We have an opportunity to lead on this issue and put Ohio’s health at the forefront of an important discussion. This is a fair bill. Simply put, it’s transparency and public health information to empower Ohioans. There are no mandatory inspections or appropriations requests and no certification requirements. We are finding that this idea has bipartisan support and a step in the right direction.

HB 282 would define mold, assist the public in understanding the health effects of mold in damp and water-damaged buildings, with methods of identification and remediation of mold, and provide contact information for organizations or government agencies that can assist the public with their concerns. It would also require the Director to review technology or treatment techniques for mold identification and remediation that provide additional protections to public health and safety, as well as establish a public awareness campaign on the dangers of mold by disseminating information via brochures and the department of commerce's website.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on House Bill 282. I will now turn it over to my joint sponsor, Representative Hillyer.