



Dan Acton
House Bill 478 Proponent Testimony
House Criminal Justice Committee
May 14th, 2024

Chair Abrams, Vice Chairman Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the committee, my name is Dan Acton and I am the Government Affairs Director for the Ohio Real Estate Investors Association (OREIA). OREIA represents 14 local associations with over 4,000 members across Ohio. My background includes more than 40 years in the property management and ownership industry. I am providing a brief statement of support to House Bill 478.

Many of you have seen the now infamous viral video of the person bragging and providing a "How to" to illegally occupy a residential home. While some found this entertaining, we most certainly did not. Thankfully, Representatives Edwards and LaRe also saw the video and other widespread media accounts around the United States and decided to act upon their instincts to protect property owners. OREIA cannot thank them enough for their leadership in addressing this serious issue.

The illegal occupation of a home is devastating to the owners involved in many ways: Damage to gain entry, oftentimes illegal use of utilities, physical damages to the property, loss of income or potentially a property sale, being used as a haven for drug use-trafficking, human trafficking, risking the safety of owners accidentally happening upon squatters and most certainly, to law enforcement called to sort out confusing and often fraudulent paperwork. The delays, subsequent damages, the mandatory use and cost of legal counsel if property is held in any type of entity or even if owners are simply unfamiliar or uncomfortable with the legal system all add up to costs that many are unable to afford and increases pressure to increase rental rates to accommodate those actual or potential costs.

OREIA is grateful for this commonsense bill to protect property owners and neighboring properties from this criminal element.

Thank you again to Representatives Edwards and LaRe and to each of you for your consideration and affirmative vote.