



**Dan Acton**  
**House Bill 480 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 480.

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 Tom Young and Steve Demetriou 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. The emergency clause will close the window to those seeking to illegally take over a home and is a much-appreciated clause.

Thank you again to Representatives Young and Demetriou and to each of you for your consideration and affirmative vote.