

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 6/11/2024

Name: Sarah Weber

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): Advocates for Basic Legal Equality

Position/Title: Staff Attorney

Address: 130 West Second Street

City: Dayton State: Ohio Zip: 45402

Best Contact Telephone: 937-535-4441 Email: sweber@ablelaw.org

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): 480

Specific Issue: _____

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? Submitting testimony via written comments only

Please provide a brief statement on your position: against HB480 as it will create harm to innocent parties.

Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.



DAYTON OFFICE

130 W. Second St.
Suite 700 E.
Dayton, OH 45402

PHONE

(937) 228-8104

TOLL-FREE

(800) 837-0814

FAX

(937) 535-4600

TTY

(888) 545-9497

www.ablelaw.org

Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 480

Sarah Weber, Attorney

Advocates for Basic Legal Equality

House Criminal Justice Committee

June 12, 2024

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair Williams, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in opposition to House Bill 480. My name is Sarah Weber. I am an attorney with Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE). ABLE is a non-profit regional law firm that provides high quality legal assistance in civil matters to help eligible low-income individuals and groups in western Ohio achieve self-reliance, and equal justice and economic opportunity.

I represent low-income tenants with minor children that are living in unsafe and uninhabitable conditions. Through this work, I have witnessed landlords shut off heat and water in retaliation for tenants seeking to enforce their rights. Unfortunately, there is a network of predatory landlords that target the poor to milk dilapidated housing for all it's worth. See: Matthew Desmond, "*Poverty, by America*" Random House 2023. Matthew Desmond found that unscrupulous landlords typically enjoy profits that are double those of landlords operating in affluent communities. *Id.*

HB 480 creates a system ripe for abuse and the loss of life. It proposes a system where law enforcement officers remove occupants of a private residence without any court oversight. Unquestionably, predatory landlords will use it to punish low-income tenants who request repairs to unsafe living conditions. A majority of those being harmed in the backlash will be minor children.

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Furthermore, HB 480 unreasonably places law enforcement officers in danger. On May 14, 2024, a Cleveland 19 investigative report found that the number of officers shot last year was the highest ever recorded. See: Sara Goldberg, *Number of police officers shot, killed in line of duty up dramatically this year*. The report stated that “in the most deadly cases, officers were attempting to make an arrest or handling domestic disputes.” *Id.*

Ohio has civil laws that allow for timely evictions and criminal laws that protect property owners from burglars or trespassers. HB 480 will only embolden the bad actors and unnecessarily place innocent lives in danger. Please vote against HB 480 and HB 478.

Sarah Weber
Staff Attorney
sweber@ablelaw.org