



OHIO NEWS MEDIA ASSOCIATION | 1335 DUBLIN ROAD, SUITE 216-B | COLUMBUS OH 43215  
MONICA NIEPORTE, PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## **Testimony of Monica Nieporte**

*Ohio News Media Association*

### **House Bill 16 – Ethics and Financial Disclosure Reform House Government Oversight Committee**

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan, and Members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 16, sponsored by State Representative Derek Merrin. This legislation would enact meaningful and common-sense transparency measures in the Ohio Revised Code.

The Ohio News Media Association is committed to protecting Ohio’s Sunshine Laws and promoting transparency. While there are many laudable provisions in HB 16, I want to call your attention to several provisions related to public access and information—

- HB 16 requires the Ohio Ethics Commission to post all financial disclosure statements on their websites along with a link to the Ohio Secretary of State’s Campaign Finance Website;
- The bill also broadens and improves information that must be included in a financial disclosure statements and allows filers to submit an amended statement to correct any errors;
- HB 16 strengthens and streamlines lobbyist and employer reporting to the Joint Legislative Ethics Committee and requires the JLEC website to connect with the Ohio Secretary of State’s Campaign Finance Website;
- Finally, the bill makes several non-substantive changes to the structure of the Ethics and Lobbying Law in order to make the law easier to read and understand;

Taken together, these changes will allow members of the media and the general public to better access information related to the finances of elected officials and the actions of lobbyists in Ohio. This will improve the quality of reporting on state government and lead to greater transparency and accountability for voters.

In closing, I feel that enactment of HB 16 is in the best interest of Ohio’s government and its citizens. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.