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**House Bill 180 Sponsor Testimony**

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Chairman Peterson, Vice-Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 180. This piece of legislation restricts a municipality or charter county from imposing a curfew unless in instances of a curfew for minors or a curfew in response to a state of emergency. This is a direct response to the recent curfews implemented in the Short North right here in Columbus due to an uptick of violence.

The ultimate goal of this bill is to protect Ohio businesses from bearing the penalty for the actions of criminals. The goal of any municipality in response to crime should be to enhance efforts and adequately support law enforcement while also

prosecuting criminals. That is the response that this community, and many other communities around the state need. But instead, Columbus has taken the step to restrict the ability for individuals not only to be around the Short North area past midnight, but also for the local businesses to be able to operate. The hours of midnight to 2am are prime operating hours for many of these restaurants and bars and this curfew only hurts them while not effectively mitigating crime. None of the terrible criminal acts that have happened in the Columbus area recently have taken place inside these local businesses, so why punish them? This example of a curfew only diverts the problem to another area. And while this situation may be specific to Columbus, it creates a dangerous precedent for the future of cities being able to use curfews in ways they were not intended to be used. I will now let my joint sponsor discuss the Home Rule issue and further importance of this piece of legislation.

### SWEARINGEN

Chairman Peterson, Vice-Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee – we do not want to restrict cities from being able to meaningfully protect their citizens. It is important that they still have the ability to implement a curfew in states of emergency. However, they also should not be able to prevent its residents from conducting business and law

abiding citizen from gathering without such an emergency. Some opponents of the bill will say that it violates Home Rule, Representative LaRe and I cannot disagree more with that opinion. This is a law that would protect the general health, safety, and welfare of law abiding Ohioans conducting lawful business in the state. The city should not be able to pick winners and losers. Which in this specific situation in the Short North, the only winners are criminals as crime continues and law enforcement remains understaffed while businesses are punished by being forced to close earlier losing important revenue to continue operations.

Both of our legislative priorities when we were elected into office were to support small business, law enforcement, and crime reduction efforts. That is precisely what this piece of legislation does and we would greatly appreciate your support. Thank you all, again, for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 180. We are happy to answer any questions that the committee may have at this time.