



**Representative Sean Patrick Brennan**  
**14<sup>th</sup> House District**  
**Serving Parma, Parma Heights, and Cleveland's West Park**

SPONSOR TESTIMONY: HB 360

2-6-24

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, and member of the House Government Oversight Committee.

добрий ранок (dobryi ranok - Good Morning)

On August 24, 1991, the ВЕРХОВНА РАДА України (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine) or Ukrainian parliament voted to declare Ukraine an independent, sovereign and democrat state – separating itself from the Soviet Union, which collapsed later that year.

For centuries, the Ukrainian people were controlled by the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union and faced a constant battle to retain their culture, way of life, and existence due to policies such as Russification and the Holodomor (Голодомор) or human created famine and genocide of 1932-33 in which millions of Ukrainians died.

Today, Ukraine finds itself in an existential war with Russia since the invasion in 2022. Like the Americans of the 1770s and 1780s, Ukrainians are fighting to protect their freedom, culture, sovereignty, and way of life against a global superpower. And, like the Americans of our founding years, they will ultimately achieve victory because, like the British, Russia may take a city here or there, but the aggressor will never be able to take the hearts and minds of the Ukrainian people.

It is estimated that over 40,000 Ohio residents claim Ukrainian ancestry. In fact, Ohio ranks 6<sup>th</sup> among the states with the largest Ukrainian populations. Further, approximately 5,000 Ukrainians have legally resettled in Ohio since the Russian invasion.

Like many of our own families, Ukrainians have come and continue to come to the United States to escape poverty and war and to achieve the American Dream in our exceptional country. The Ukrainian people are God-fearing, freedom-loving, well-educated, law-abiding, hard-working, and tax-paying contributors to Ohio's economy. They attend our schools, own business, and work in our great state. In short, they enrich the composition and quality of Ohio.

**Committees:**

State and Local Government  
-Ranking Member  
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Primary and Secondary Education  
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Ways & Means

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I know all of this from experience because Parma – Ohio’s 7<sup>th</sup> largest city - where I have lived for over 30 years is Ohio’s Ukrainian capital, claiming over 4,400 Ukrainian residents. They are my neighbors, my friends, and some of them were my students.

**This bill will designate August 24<sup>th</sup> as “Ukrainian Independence Day” in Ohio.** By recognizing Ukrainian Independence Day, we send a message that Ohio acknowledges Ukrainian culture and supports and welcomes these good people.

I am happy to say that our hard working friends in the legislative service commission report in the fiscal note and local impact statement that HB 360 will have no direct fiscal effect, nor require any action on the part of the state or local political subdivisions.”

I want to thank my esteemed colleague, the Honorable Bill Seitz, for joining me, our 50 co-sponsors, and all of you for your consideration.

Ohio’s thousands of Ukrainians and I would be honored by your vote.

Слава Україні! (Slava Ukraini – Glory be to Ukraine)  
Дякую (Dyкуу - Thank you)

