



**Before the House State and Local Government Committee
House Bill 204 – Designate Arab American Heritage Month
by Representative Richard Dell’Aquila and
Representative Dani Isaacsohn
Tuesday, December 10, 2024**

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennen, and members of the State and Local Government Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony, along with my joint sponsor Representative Dell’Aquila, on House Bill 204. This legislation would designate the month of April as Arab American Heritage Month.

Arab Americans have long played an integral role in shaping the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the United States and of the state of Ohio. Since arriving to the state over 125 years ago, Arab Americans have impacted much of American life through their addition to our labor workforce, creation of small businesses, and population growth.¹ The Arab American population in Ohio is approximately 117,000, making the state 8th largest in terms of residents across the United States. Through the designation of Arab American Heritage Month, we as a state can help illuminate and celebrate the significant role that Arab Americans play in Ohio.

Arab American Heritage Month is already widely recognized in local communities throughout the state of Ohio and in other states across the nation. Hillard City Council has officially proclaimed this month as Arab American Heritage Month and multiple universities in the state recognize it as well, including the University of Cincinnati and the Ohio State University. Illinois, Oregon, Virginia, California, and the Indiana Senate have all passed legislation permanently designating this month.² In 2020, Governor Mike DeWine recognized April as Arab American Heritage Month, and three years later, President Biden declared April as National Arab American Heritage Month with an official proclamation.³⁻⁴ The bill we present today simply aims to codify this recognition into law, ensuring lasting acknowledgment of the contributions and history of Arab Americans.

¹ [Encyclopedia of Cleveland History](#)

² [Arab American Foundation](#)

³ [DeWine Recognition](#)

⁴ [Biden Proclamation](#)

Designating April as Arab American Heritage Month is not just about recognizing the significance of Arab American's contributions to our state, but it is also about honoring the diversity that strengthens our state as a whole. Arab Americans have contributed to the success and prosperity of Ohio, and that deserves to be celebrated each and every year.

Thank you, Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the State & Local Government Committee, for your time and consideration today. We'd be happy to answer any questions.