



**JEAN SCHMIDT
STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Chair Hall, Vice Chair Claggett, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of Technology and Innovation Committee:

Thank you for allowing us to provide sponsor testimony for HB 17, to prohibit state employees and agencies from downloading and using TikTok on government devices.

HB 17 follows previously issued federal and state executive orders. The bill prohibits the download, installation, and use of applications such as TikTok, WeChat, and any other applications or services owned by Chinese entities. Banning these programs from government devices protects sensitive state information from potential breaches to the Chinese government.

HB 17 does not – I repeat, does NOT – prohibit TikTok from personal devices, nor does it limit personal usage by government employees. Instead, this bill is a measure to safeguard our state’s sensitive private information by keeping access to the data stored on them out of foreign hands.

This issue of maintaining cybersecurity is bipartisan and necessary. Earlier this year, President Biden issued an order prohibiting Tiktok from being downloaded or used on government devices. Soon after, Governor DeWine issued a similar executive order, which was well-received by both Republicans and Democrats. There are simply too many unknowns about the cybersecurity and risks of foreign-controlled programs like TikTok to allow their usage on state devices.

Passage of HB 17 will eliminate the risk of the Chinese government using legal or regulatory power to push propaganda and misinformation. Moreover, it protects our sensitive state data, and by extension, our citizens, from potential breaches by foreign actors.

Thank you for your time.