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**Written Proponent Testimony – HB 60**  
**Ohio Poverty Law Center**  
**House Ways and Means Committee**

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Merrin, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, my name is Danielle DeLeon Spires, and I am a policy advocate at the Ohio Poverty Law Center. The Ohio Poverty Law Center advocates for evidence-based policies that protect and expand the rights of low-income Ohioans. We are a non-profit law firm working closely with Ohio's legal aid community, serving Ohioans who are living, working, and raising their families in poverty. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on House Bill 60 to increase the amount of and expand the income qualifications for the homestead exemption.

House Bill 60 increases the amount of the homestead exemption for elderly homeowners or homeowners with a permanent and total disability and certain of their qualifying surviving spouses by \$15,000 and indexes that amount to inflation. The bill also expands eligibility for the homestead exemption by raising the income eligibility requirement above which a taxpayer may not claim the exemption. These changes increase the number of people who could benefit from the exemption right now in a time of record inflation, along with record increases in property values.

Nearly 13.1% of Ohioans are living in poverty—earning less than \$23,030 annually for a family of three—according to the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies' (OACAA) State of Poverty in Ohio report. These Ohioans face legal issues and other problems that are intensified by living in poverty, such as a lack of suitable housing; access to health care, food assistance, or disability assistance; domestic violence; education inequity; and employment and income instability. More than one out of every three Ohio households lack the liquid assets need to stay out of poverty for three months.

Despite a decrease in Ohio's poverty rate, the state's poverty rate is higher than the U.S. poverty rate of 12.3 percent. This includes 8.1% Ohio seniors (age 65 and older) who were in poverty in 2019. Expanding this opportunity will allow for more Ohioans to remain in their homes as they age and provide stability amidst rising economic costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on House Bill 60.

Sincerely,

Danielle DeLeon Spires



**Danielle DeLeon Spires (she/her/hers)**

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