

Testimony on H.B. 280  
House Ways and Means Committee  
By Fred Strahorn  
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Thank you, Chairman Roemer, Vice-Chair Lorenz and Ranking Members Troy and committee members for giving me an opportunity to testify before you today in opposition H.B. 280 which deals with lead poisoning prevention. I am here on behalf of the Ohio Healthy Homes Network (OHHN) which is a non-profit organization engaged in advocacy to promote healthy, safe and affordable housing. Our organization's work is centered around indoor environmental quality with a particular focus on lead poisoning prevention and safety. OHHN is part of a network of non-profit organizations that work throughout the state on housing issues.

Today, I am here to testify in opposition of H.B. 280 as it is currently written. While I certainly believe the sponsors of the bill have good intentions, there are several provisions contained in H.B. 280 that OHHN has serious concerns.

The provision in the bill that requires political subdivisions that have a lead rental registry to approve or deny a lead rental registry application within 30 days will result in the unintended consequence of forcing political subdivisions to simply deny a much larger percentage of applications. As I understand it, a common cause for delays is many landlords fill out the application incorrectly. This provision would make it difficult for cities to work with landlords to cure those defects and instead force to deny a greater number of applications because they would not be able to afford the loss of critical local government funds. The threat of losing local government funds for non-compliance all but ensures that if a landlord makes mistakes in their application, leading to delays in the process, a political subdivision would have to deny the application.

Currently, landlords have 90 days to resubmit an application for certification by resubmitting lead test results. H.B. 280 would extend that timeframe to 180 days. OHHN, as an organization committed to preventing children from being lead poisoning is disconcerting to think of children potentially being exposed to a lead hazard for twice as the current law stipulates.

H.B. 280 would allow lead clearance technicians, lead inspectors, or lead risk assessor to conduct interim controls at a residential unit, child care facility, or school. Interim lead controls still involve significant intervention that requires specific training that these lead license holders do not possess. OHHN feels that it would be inappropriate for clearance technicians, lead inspectors, or lead risk assessors to perform interim controls.

Ohio has an estimated 3.5 million homes with a lead hazard problem. Regarding the lead abatement tax credit, OHHN believes that it would be exceedingly important that all citizens have access to the lead abatement tax credit and that measures are taken to make sure the credit is not accessed by a small universe of applicants, as much as practicable.

I have spoken with a number of General Assembly members over the last two years concerning lead poisoning prevention and the response has been incredibly encouraging. I know the sponsors of H.B. 280 care about this issue as well. As a former member of the Legislature, I can tell you that I was unaware of the intricacies of this problem. In my time with OHHN, it has been a constant education on numerous

aspects and implications of the lead hazard facing Ohio. OHHN and partners are very grateful for the interest that has been shown to this issue. Unfortunately, OHHN cannot support H.B. 280.

This concludes my testimony. And once again, I want to thank Chairman Roemer, Vice-Chair Lorenz and Ranking Member Troy and committee members for listening to my testimony. At this time, I would be happy to answer any questions.

**## DRAFT ##**