



Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee  
HB 201 - Proponent Testimony  
Sarah Spence, Executive Director  
December 13, 2023

Chairman Reineke, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Smith and members of the Energy and Public Utilities Committee: thank you for allowing me to give proponent testimony for House Bill 201 (HB 201). My name is Sarah Spence, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Ohio Conservative Energy Forum (OHCEF).

OHCEF was founded in 2015 to advocate for a diverse, all-of-the above energy portfolio – one that includes not only existing sources of traditional energy generation, but one that also seeks to expand the development of clean and renewable energy sources. OHCEF believes that clean energy and energy made clean through technology can strengthen both our economy and our national security while providing unmatched opportunities for Ohio-led innovation and job creation.

In its simplest terms, HB 201, as amended, is a free-market, economic development piece of legislation that allows for Ohio-led innovation and job creation.

Ohio has a long and proud history of manufacturing, including automotive and automotive supply chain. Ohio has over 108,000 jobs in auto manufacturing here, and many of those jobs involve making combustion engine vehicles and vehicle parts. We're growing our hydrogen fuel cell capabilities. SARTA in Stark County has one of the largest hydrogen public transportation fleets in North America, and Hyperion is building its fuel cell R&D and manufacturing facility in Hilliard. We've all seen the investment in and growth of the Mahoning Valley into Voltage Valley. EV battery and EV manufacturing plants coming to Lorain, Fayette Counties and others, and the DeWine/Husted administration has announced their EV workforce strategy to continue growing skilled Ohio workers.

HB 201 will ensure that no state agency or local government can hinder the free-market innovations we are seeing in the automotive industry by restricting the use or sale of any vehicle based on what type of engine or fuel source a vehicle uses. Bans on using or selling certain vehicles after a date certain creates artificial deadlines, drives up costs and stifles innovation. We have all seen the innovations over the decades that have increased miles per gallon for combustion engines, and are just starting to see the same innovation used to bring increased miles between charges for EVs. Allowing the free market to work will give the auto



industry the time needed to balance cost and quality while reshoring our manufacturing and supply chain.

We'd like to thank the bill sponsors, Rep. Hillyer and Rep. Demetriou for their diligent work in crafting this piece of legislation and for this committee's work in continuing to make improvements that help develop our infrastructure for economic projects. HB 201 would keep a diverse vehicle market open in Ohio, keeping Ohioans in the driver's seat when it comes to having options in vehicles that meet their personal needs, preferences and financial situation.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify in support of HB 201. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.