

March 14th, 2023

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, Senators:

My name is Ibrahima Sow and I have the honor of serving as the chair this commissions current chair. We join you today to humbly your favorable support of Senate Bill 54. The three core objectives of NAIC are to Advocate, Impact, and Connect, while representing a constituency of over 69,000 new Ohioans across more than 40 counties.

This legislation establishes an account in the state treasury for the New African Immigrants Commission. Currently, the New African Immigrant Commission is unable to receive funding in the forms of grants and gifts due to not having a state account. This is NOT an appropriation. This will allow the New African Immigrants Commission to receive grants and gifts used to promote immigrants' self-sufficiency by connecting them to state, nonprofit, and private programs, and services. These resources are crucial to the advancement of the sub-Saharan African population in Ohio.

Like our peers such as the Ohio Latino Commission and others, we have responsibilities that are defined by the Ohio legislature, in our case ORC 4112.31 and ORC 4112.32. But unlike other Ohio commissions, we are unable to meet these responsibilities because of gaps in our statutes. Our commission of 11 and committee members, all volunteers from across the state, have identified opportunities for collaboration and support, but without an account in the state treasurer's office, we cannot take meaningful impacts on much of our statutory.

Over the past few years, NAIC has conducted a series of listening tours across the state, collaborated with other organizations in helping to make the 2020 US Census a success and in supporting ongoing COVID-19 prevention efforts. With this legislation, we can expand on our work and increase our impact.

Sincerely,

Ibrahima Sow

Chairman, Ohio New African Immigrants Commission



New African Immigrants Commission

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