



**Senate Financial Institutions and Technology Committee
Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 94
May 23, 2023**

Chairman Wilson, Vice Chair Hackett, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Financial Institutions and Technology Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 94 (SB 94).

Formed in 1910, Ohio REALTORS® is the state's largest professional trade association with approximately 37,000 members representing both residential and commercial practitioners, as well as auctioneers and appraisers. We also represent homeowners, homebuyers, as well as investors and support policies to protect private property rights.

Historically, our organization has opposed fees, taxes or surcharges that increase the cost of homeownership, regardless of how small the increase may be. However, we are diverting from that position to support SB 94, which would modernize electronic records and conveyances maintained by county recorders. We appreciate the sponsors' being mindful of the rising cost of homeownership by limiting the document preservation surcharge in the bill to \$5, which will support the preservation and digitization of documents and ongoing costs incurred by the county recorder's office in making these records publicly available.

If the COVID-19 pandemic shed light on anything, it is that the ability to offer functioning online systems is more critical than ever. This is certainly the case for the transfer of real property. By creating an online system to record and access documents in all 88 counties, future efforts to view these documents will be faster and more convenient.

In addition to supporting the digitization of county records, we also support language in ORC 5232.02 that would allow a rental unit owner's agent or representative to register a rental property with the County Auditor. Current statute only allows a rental unit owner to register their property when required by the County Auditor. This change would extend the permission to an owner's agent or representative.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments in support of SB 94.

Sincerely,

Scott Williams
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