



## MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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**Senate Bill 166  
Proponent Testimony  
December 12, 2023  
Senate Financial Institutions and Technology Committee  
William Murdock, Executive Director, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission**

Chair 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 on Senate Bill 166. My name is William Murdock, I am the Executive Director of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC). MORPC is a regional planning organization and regional council representing more than 85 local governments and partner organizations across 15 Central Ohio counties. Our communities span urban, suburban, and rural areas, comprising a broad cross-section of Ohioans. We provide programs, services, and funding related to transportation, land use, data, sustainability, and economic prosperity.

Data anchors much of our work at MORPC, and too often, racial disparities are readily apparent. Underlying many of these troubling trends is a drastic gap in wealth between minority groups and their white peers. Here in the City of Columbus, for example, a city report from 2020 found that median incomes for Black households were 40% less than that of white households. Moreover, 33 percent of Black households and 31 percent of Hispanic households had zero net wealth, compared to only 17 percent of white households. This disproportionality can be traced to many discriminatory policies and practices over many decades – not least among them being the lack of access to capital. As a result, many minority communities have not been able over time to maximize opportunities for wealth generation and capital investment.

I believe every member of this committee will agree that pursuit of the “American dream” should be accessible for every Ohioan. Starting and running one’s own business – the epitome of this dream – is challenging enough on its own, let alone in the face of the capital gap minority communities face in the marketplace. Senate Bill 166 astutely recognizes this fact, taking minority business dollars one step further by allowing state minority business enterprise loans to be used to increase working capital. It is our hope that because of this legislation, Ohio’s economic success will be more widely shared, and minority business owners will be more empowered to take risks, grow, and reap the requisite rewards.


Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Hackett, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Financial Institutions and Technology Committee, thank you again for bringing up Senate Bill 166 for

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consideration. If you have any questions about the contents of my testimony, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at [wmurdock@morpc.org](mailto:wmurdock@morpc.org).