



Christopher Knestrick
Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH)
3631 Perkins Ave, #3A-3
Cleveland, OH 44114

September 25, 2023

Dear Chairman Rulli and Ranking Member DeMora,

I am writing in opposition of SB 158. My name is Christopher Knestrick and I am the Executive Director of the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 158.

Over 180 volunteers in Cleveland collected 6,411 signatures from registered Cleveland voters to put Issue 38 on the ballot. SB 158 strips Cleveland voters of their right to decide for themselves on the question of creating a participatory budgeting process in Cleveland. The process of participatory budgeting has been used in hundreds of cities around the United States as a form of civic education and engagement for residents to work with elected officials and city government to determine how their taxpayer dollars are spent. I believe issue 38 would help strengthen and revise the neighborhoods by creating programs that will help people our organization serves, people experiencing homelessness and housing instability in Cleveland.

Elected officials in cities across the country use the same policy proposed under Issue 38 to work alongside residents to determine the use of taxpayer dollars in their neighborhoods at the most local level. SB 158 prevents localities from addressing local problems. I strongly oppose Issue 158 because it was introduced to prevent the passage of Cleveland Issue 38. I urge you to honor Cleveland's home rule right to self-govern.

Sincerely,

Christopher Knestrick
Executive Director
Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH)

