

OHIO SENATE GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
PROPONENT TESTIMONY – HOUSE BILL 257

Amy L. Arrighi, Executive Director

June 26, 2024

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Ohio Senate Government Oversight Committee, on behalf of the Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA), thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on House Bill 257.

RITA is a regional council of governments formed by Ohio cities and villages to collect and administer their municipal income tax as a shared service. Today, RITA's membership includes 389 cities and villages located in 81 of Ohio's 88 counties.

As a large, and growing, statewide organization, RITA welcomes legislation that will permit public meetings to be held virtually, and permit virtual attendance at public meetings.

RITA is governed by a nine-member Board of Trustees, the members of which are elected by the cities and villages that participate in the council of governments. RITA's Board of Trustees, as well as the larger council of governments, are public bodies required today to hold public meetings in person, with members required to attend in person to participate and vote on matters before the Board or the council.

During 2020, 2021 and early 2022 when the law temporarily permitted virtual public meeting attendance, we saw record participation by our member municipalities from all across the State of Ohio with no disruption to our operations or to the accessibility of our meetings. In fact, virtual attendance made our public meetings more accessible, and resulted in more engagement by our member municipalities.

The ability to attend public meetings virtually will encourage more statewide participation by our council of governments members and provide opportunity for more statewide input into the governance of our organization. This in turn benefits all of our member municipalities and the taxpayers we serve all across the State of Ohio.

On behalf of the RITA Board of Trustees and Regional Council of Governments Officers, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 257.