Crystal Lett

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Representative Crystal Lett's Sponsor Testimony re HB 585
House Community Revitalization Committee

17 November 2025

Chair Click, Vice Chair Mullins, Ranking Member Brewer, and members of the Community Revitalization Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on HB 585.

Ohio is experiencing a severe statewide housing shortage. Ohioans with developmental disabilities feel this crisis more acutely than most. Approximately **260,000** Ohioans have an intellectual or developmental disability (I/DD). More than **21,000** individuals live with aging family caregivers. Only **9%** of people with I/DD receive comprehensive residential services outside their family home.

In Central Ohio, we face one of the most severe housing shortages in the state. We all see it: rents rising sharply, families competing for fewer and fewer accessible homes, and individuals with disabilities waiting months, sometimes years, for a stable place to live. For disability families like mine, and so many others that I hear from across Franklin County, the question is no longer *if* someone will get access to housing that fits their needs - it's *whether* they'll find housing at all.

This bill confronts that reality head-on.
For decades, the Community Capital Assistance (CCA) program has been instrumental in helping county boards of developmental disabilities acquire and develop housing for individuals who rely on supported living services. However, as Ohio's housing landscape has evolved, the program's administrative rules have not kept pace. Outdated requirements limit innovation, slow development, and create unnecessary barriers for local partners working to provide safe, community-integrated housing.

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County boards of developmental disabilities are working extremely hard, but they lack flexibility and clear guidance to build or acquire the kinds of housing options our communities actually need - options that reflect the diversity of living preferences among people with disabilities in Central Ohio.
HB 585 changes that.

Far too many individuals wait years, sometimes decades, for appropriate, affordable housing. Others are forced into settings that do not reflect their preferences, needs, or desired level of independence. County boards and nonprofit housing providers have been clear: they can do more if the state modernizes the Community Capital Assistance program.
Families are desperate for housing options that are safe, integrated, affordable, and close to their natural supports. They want their loved ones living in neighborhoods, not institutions. They want choices, not obstacles. And they want a system that reflects the realities of today's housing market, not the market of 20 years ago.
This bill helps get us there.

It empowers DODD to innovate, it supports county boards in responding to local needs, and it gives individuals with disabilities the dignity of choice. Most importantly, it helps address the housing crisis that is hitting people with developmental disabilities harder than any other group in our region.

We are grateful for the broad support this legislation has already received from Inclusive Housing Resources, NorthCoast Community Homes, Creative Housing, Inclusive Neighborhoods Housing Corporation, and numerous county boards of developmental disabilities. These partners have helped shape a straightforward, balanced bill centered on accountability, flexibility, and innovation.

I am proud to bring this legislation before you, and I am grateful for the committee's attention to a matter that affects so many families across the state.
Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

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