Community Revitalization Committee

Hearing Date: March 17, 2026

Proponent Testimony of Belinda Spinosi, Disability Advocate

Supporting HB 585
And Requesting addition of language into HB 585:
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to allow immediate deinstitutionalization of people with disabilities
into existing apartment housing
to live in the community,

and to require the Ohio Board of Building Standards
to write accessible housing code, training, certification, and oversight,
equivalent to what it already does for other housing and buildings,
to make multifamily apartments accessible now and all future building and planning.

To amend section 5123.351 of the Revised Code regarding the authority of the Department of Developmental Disabilities to adopt rules regarding the use of community capital assistance funds.

Honorable Chair Click, Vice Chair Mullins, Ranking Member Brewer, HB 585 Sponsors Representative Mike Odioso and Honorable Representative Crystal Lett, and esteemed Community Revitalization Committee Members. Thank you for tis opportunity to provide proponent testimony today on HB 585.

My name is Belinda Spinosi, I am a disability advocate from Columbus.

I am here today to strongly support House Bill 585, which would increase the flexibility of existing funding to create housing to deinstitutionalize people with developmental disabilities.

Except this bill does not go far enough.

Ohio disability advocates have been asking for accessible housing since the Fair Housing Act, required all newly constructed, attached 4 or more multifamily housing units, first occupied since March 13, 1991, and ground levels to be accessible under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

https://www.justice.gov/crt/fair-housing-act-1 Discrimination in Housing Based Upon Disability, Discrimination in Housing Based Upon Disability -- Accessibility Features for New Construction**.**

On the positive side, HB 585 could begin to support the unmet need provision in the 2022 Ohio settlement agreement Bell v DeWine *https://www.centerforpublicrep.org/court_case/ball-v-kasich/ and 1999 Olmstead Act https://archive.ada.gov/olmstead/olmstead_about.htm*.

My suggestions for amendments to this bill are twofold:

First, specific to HB 585, (B) 1-3, please add to acquisition and construct language to explicitly say funds can be used to live in existing apartment housing, which can right now allow people to fully integrate in communities. Many have been waiting on a wait list for more than ten years, with their paperwork in order, because of the lack of existing accessible housing stock.

Second, the problem with the existing accessible housing stock is the Ohio legislature has yet to pass law that requires the Ohio Board of Building Standards to write and pass accessible housing code. The Ohio Board of Building Standards told me that it does not have authority to write accessible housing code, required since the Fair Housing Act passed.

The Ohio Board of Building Standards also does not train Ohio builders, contractors, third party contractors, counties, townships, or local governments on accessible housing, or oversee accessible housing, in the same manner it already does for other building and housing code, training, and oversight responsibilities.

In existing Ohio law,

Ohio has passed Section 4112.02 | Unlawful discriminatory practices, https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-revised-code/section-4112.02 Though Section 4112.02 does

not ask or authorize the Ohio Board of Building Standards to write or pass accessible housing code.

Ohio has passed Ohio Building Code of 2017, Chapter 11 Accessibility, https://up.codes/viewer/ohio/ibc-2015/chapter/11/accessibility#11 which also does not require the Ohio Board of Building Standards to write or pass accessible housing code.

And to intentionally harm the accessible housing stock,

Ohio has also passed Ohio Existing Building Code 2021, and March 1, 2024 https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/com.ohio.gov/documents/2024%20Ohio%20Building%20Code%20Rules%20Effective%20March%201,%202024.pdf

Ohio Existing Building Code is attempting to grandfather all who build, plan, own, permit housing in Ohio from violations of the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Section 301.2 https://up.codes/viewer/ohio/iebc-2021/chapter/3/provisions-for-all-compliance-methods#3 Alteration, Addition or Change of Occupancy **in 3 Compliance Methods: 301.3.1 Prescriptive Compliance Method, 301.3.2 Work Area Compliance Method,** and **301.3.3 Performance Compliance Method in** "The *alteration*, *addition* or *change of occupancy* of all *existing buildings*"

The Board of Building Standards recently held a Stakeholder Meeting to extend a third extension of housing exemptions to local government/permitting governments and third-party contractors. I asked the BBS to stop these actions and write, train, certify, and oversee code. BBS stated they do not have authority to write accessible housing code and advised me to file a discrimination grievance with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, which I followed through immediately after that meeting.

Passing this bill without permission to live in the community in accessible apartments will continue to deny those who have been waiting on accessible housing for decades.

I urge you to amend HB585 with language which explicitly permits the ability to make our housing safer for everyone, including people with disabilities.

Thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions.

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Additional references:

The State misleads itself in reports.

In its March 2025 report, Analysis of Impediments, The Ohio Department of Development states," Ohio's substantially equivalent (Fair housing Act) legislation passed in 1992," from State of Ohio, March 2025, Analysis of Impediments. No Ohio Fair Housing Act law exists. Pg30, 2para, last sentence.

The Executive Summary incorrectly states that Ohio's Fair Housing Law is Ohio Revised Code 4112.02(H), pg 6, para1.

https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/v1741625413/development.ohio.gov/community/coummunityresources/2025_State_of_Ohio_AI_DRAFT.pdf