

49th House District
Stark County
(City of Canton, Jackson
Township, Plain Township)

Committees
Judiciary (Chair)
Finance
Education
Ways and Means

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Jim Thomas
State Representative

Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 161
House Development Committee
April 9, 2025

Chairman Hoops, Vice-Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the House Development Committee: thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 161.

As I was born and raised in Stark County, I am proud to call this my home. The City of Canton is fortunate to have a number of tourist attractions including the National First Ladies Library and Museum, the William McKinley Presidential Library and Museum, and the Pro Football Hall of Fame Museum and Village.

As the members of this committee are well aware, tourism contributes to the quality of life, job market, and wealth of the community. The Stark County Convention and Visitors Bureau, dba Visit Canton, is funded by a lodging tax administered through the County. The organization's mission is to promote travel to Stark County and to facilitate operations that support the travel and tourism industry.

In 2023, travel and tourism generated a \$2.2 Billion economic impact in Stark County. Travel and tourism spending supported 6.5% of all jobs and generated \$217.2 million in household incomes across Stark County in 2023.

Unfortunately, Stark County and Visit Canton have not been receiving state and local sales and use taxes from short-term rental stays. This bill would fix this issue, and require the collection and remittance of the taxes by the operator of the short-term rental platform.

According to data provided by Visit Canton, as of 2/14/25, there were 170 current short-term rental listings in Stark County. Over the past year, host revenue was approximately \$2.24 million. The average daily rate was \$131. The loss of county revenue from the 6% lodging tax was approximately \$134,841. The loss of revenue to the state from the 5.75% sales and use tax was approximately \$129,226. The loss of revenue to the County from the .75% sales tax rate was approximately \$16,856.

Chairman Hoops, Vice-Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the House Development Committee: thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 161. Representative Bird and I are happy to answer any questions.