

Proponent Testimony – Ohio House Bill 161
Presented to the House Development Committee
Allyson Bussey, Visit Canton- Stark County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Date: Tuesday, April 29th, 2025



Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and esteemed members of the House Development Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony in support of House Bill 161.

I am Allyson Bussey, President & CEO of Visit Canton, the Stark County Convention & Visitors Bureau. We strongly support HB 161. This bill would require short-term rental properties to collect and remit all applicable lodging and sales taxes, just as our traditional hotels and motels currently do.

This legislation is about fairness and ensuring that every participant in Ohio's travel economy contributes equitably to the communities they serve.

Our data shows that approximately 200 short-term rentals are operational in Stark County, with new properties becoming available almost daily. These properties account for hundreds of thousands of dollars in uncollected and unremitted lodging and sales taxes each year, revenue that could be allocated directly to our county, townships, and municipalities' general fund to support essential public services, infrastructure, economic development, and tourism promotion through the convention and visitors bureau.

Visit Canton believes that all lodging providers, whether a nationally branded hotel or a privately owned short-term rental, should play by the same rules. Our hotels contribute meaningfully to our local economy through tax remittance; It is only fair that short-term rentals are held to the same standard, particularly as their footprint continues to grow throughout our region.

By passing HB 161, Ohio will ensure consistency in tax policy and level the playing field for all lodging businesses. This legislation will create a more transparent and accountable system for local governments to identify and collect applicable taxes and fees for these properties.

Short-term rentals are a significant and growing segment of Ohio's tourism industry. It's time they become full and equitable partners in supporting the communities that make their businesses possible. In return, the convention and visitors' bureaus representing these regions can incorporate these properties into their marketing and promotional initiatives, consequently driving more reservations to these short-term rentals.

On behalf of Visit Canton and the Stark County tourism industry, I respectfully urge your support of House Bill 161. Thank you for your time and commitment to strengthening Ohio's economy and local communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Allyson Bussey
President & CEO

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401 MARKET AVE. N • CANTON, OH 44702 • 330.454.1439 • 800.552.6051

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