

HB 161 TESTIMONY

JEFF BLOM, PRESIDENT, CLERMONT COUNTY CVB

APRIL 29, 2025

Chair Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz and, Ranking Member Abdullahi and members of the House Development Committee thank you for the opportunity to testify as a proponent of HB 161.

My name is Jeff Blom and I have been President of the Clermont County Convention and Visitors Bureau for over seven years. I am testifying regarding our organization's support for House Bill 161. I am also the Past President of the Ohio Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus.

Our industry ask is simple. Short-term rentals engage in the same activity as hotels, so they should pay the same taxes. HB 161 does not create different rates for hotels or STRs, and how the funds are disbursed does not change. Visitors pay the lodging tax, not residents.

In Clermont County, short term rentals (STRs) have increased in number and revenue over the past three years. Three years ago, there were 99 listings through Key Data, our short-term rental online platform. Today, there are over 170 STR listings through Key Data, an increase of over 70 percent. In 2024, estimated revenue for short term rental bookings was \$3.1 million, which was an increase of 15% over \$2.7 million in 2023.

If both sales tax and lodging tax were collected and remitted, here is what that would have generated in 2024:

- Sales Tax (6.75% in Clermont County): \$222,750
- Lodging Tax: (7.00% in Clermont County): \$231,000
- 3% of Lodging Tax goes back to municipality where hotels/short term rentals are located. This amount would have been approximately \$99,000.

A short-term rental lodging tax is NOT a new tax. Lodging taxes were established in 1967 and the sales tax was established in 1935—this is a new activity and it should be treated the same way as traditional lodging options.

Michael Daly, a short-term rental owner with units in Williamsburg and Hamersville, also own the Flash Baseball Complex. He is in support of a STR lodging tax, knowing that the lodging taxes collected and remitted, support bringing in sports tournaments and events, as well as leisure travelers. He has stated that STR owners will only benefit from increased marketing and exposure, generating more revenue. The lodging tax also helps cover police, fire, EMS calls and infrastructure improvements.

We kindly ask that the Ohio House of Representatives vote to approve HB 161. Thank you for your time and consideration.