



Majority Whip Nick Santucci
House Development Committee
Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 291
May 28, 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 291, to create the Ohio International Trade Commission.

The establishment of this Commission will pave the way for greater economic prosperity in our state by exploring ways to advance a mutually beneficial relationship between Ohio and foreign countries. The Commission will include members of the General Assembly as well as representatives from Ohio's international communities with origins in Japan, Ireland, Israel, and two additional countries selected by the Director of Development. The work of the Commission will promote multilateral trade and investment, joint research agreements, business and academic exchanges, creation of technology centers, mutual economic support and investment in infrastructure and other issues to be determined by the Commission.

This Commission will help establish Ohio as an economic leader in the United States. In 2024, our state ranked as the 10th largest exporter in the United States, with more than \$56 billion in exported goods. However, this is only a 7% increase from the export level in 2014, demonstrating only modest growth.¹ This legislation provides a strategic framework to accelerate growth by engaging with foreign partners and leveraging our strengths. The Commission's work will provide essential economic support for our state by increasing exports, attracting foreign direct investment, creating new high-skill jobs, and enhancing the competitiveness of Ohio-based businesses in global markets, positioning Ohio at the forefront of economic progress and innovation.

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and Members of the House Development Committee, thank you again for giving me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 291.

¹ Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, *Countries & Regions*, "United States," <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/united-states>.