



**September 29, 2025**

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

My name is Archie Beasley and I am the Program Director for The Junction Coalition's Lead Program.

I am going to take a moment to say, I appreciate each of you for the consideration of this legislation and the opportunity to share our testimony on House Bill 307—the Lead Line Replacement Act.

**NO AMOUNT OF LEAD IS SAFE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION!**

The Junction Coalition is a Community Based Organization (“CBO”) in the Junction neighborhood in Toledo, OH. Our neighborhood, and Toledo in general has a high rate of aging infrastructure, low income, and environmental health burdens.

Because we live and work alongside our neighbors, we are uniquely positioned to identify households at risk, provide education and outreach, and help residents navigate lead service line replacement programs. Our role goes beyond service delivery—we are the bridge between families and the public systems designed to protect them.

Two recurring questions regarding lead which are raised in our community include:

1. how do I know my home has lead or galvanized pipes requiring replacement?
2. how much does it cost/who will pay to replace the pipes?

These questions reveal both a gap in knowledge and a deep mistrust of government. For families already struggling financially, the fear of losing water service because they cannot afford pipe replacement which creates paralysis and silence.



That is why the provision in HB 307 prohibiting water shutoffs due to inability to pay is so critical. It sends a clear message that this program is about public health, not about punishing those who can least afford it.

Likewise, requiring public water systems to establish financial assistance programs for low-income households, seniors, and residents with disabilities is essential to building trust. These provisions create a bridge to historically underserved communities like ours.

To understand the urgency, consider our local schools: Pickett Elementary, Ella P. Stewart School for Girls, and Jones Leadership Academy. These schools serve children who overwhelmingly live in homes built before World War II, many of which still have their original lead service lines. Even our own Junction Coalition building at 419 Junction is 130 years old.

We know what lead exposure does to children. It robs them of brain development, attention span, and IQ points. It affects their ability to succeed academically and socially. Historically, Pickett and Stewart Elementary Schools have been among the lowest-performing schools in Toledo Public Schools.

This is not about test scores. When children struggle in school, they are more likely to drop out and face involvement with the criminal justice system. Eliminating lead service lines in our neighborhood is not only a health intervention—it is a crime prevention strategy and an investment in Ohio's future workforce.

Replacing these lead lines won't just raise grade point averages—it will change life trajectories by keeping children healthy, focused, and free to pursue their dreams instead of facing a pipeline to prison.

As a trusted member of the community, The Junction Coalition can assist in some of HB 307's objectives. Providing a built in infrastructure to supply the community with water filters and all educational resources to residents. We can act as a liaison



between residents and public agencies as lead line replacement moves forward in the neighborhood.

From our experience, if HB 307 is passed without active participation and partnership with community organizations, the risk is that the most vulnerable households will be left behind.

Every child in our state, from Ashtabula to Athens, from Xenia to Zanesville and every child in the great state of Ohio deserves clean lead free drinking water that won't put their parents in the poorhouse.

We at The Junction Coalition urge the Legislature to pass HB 307 while ensuring several key factors are included:

1. adequate and sustained funding for outreach and technical assistance,
2. flexibility and simplicity in application and documentation requirements, and
3. strong oversight and accountability to ensure every Ohioan drinking water through a lead service line is remediated within the 15 year scope of the bill.

The Junction Coalition brings institutional legitimacy, deep community trust, and on-the-ground capacity to help HB 307 succeed. Together, we can turn this legislation into lasting change for our state.

Chairman Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Abdullahi, and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to speak today. We deeply appreciate your time, your attention, and your commitment to Ohio's children and families.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB 307 and to partner with organizations like ours to ensure its success.

Thank you.

Archie Beasley

On behalf of The Junction Coalition