



OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

H.B. 161, Interested Party Testimony
Ohio House Development Committee
Matt MacLaren, Director of Travel and Tourism Policy
March 17, 2026

Chair Hoops, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Brownlee, and members of the House Development Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written interested party testimony on House Bill 161.

The Ohio Chamber is the state's leading business advocate and represents over 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

House Bill 161 has the applaudable goal of creating a statewide framework for taxes from short term rental properties. The bill should also include restrictions to prevent extremely high tax rates that local governments can impose on short-term rentals, a centralized collection point for taxes remitted by short-term rental platforms, and a statewide framework for licensing and regulating short-term rentals.

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce would like HB 161 to include restrictions on the total taxes that local governments can require short-term rentals to remit. This is because:

Under House Bill 161, short-term hosts in Cincinnati would have to remit an extremely high tax rate of 26.3%. (7.5% county lodging tax, 4% city lodging tax, 7.8% sales tax, and 7% short term rental excise tax for the city's affordable housing trust fund).

Total tax to remit by short-term rental hosts if HB 161 passes:

- Cleveland: 17.5%
- Columbus: 18%
- Cincinnati: 26.3%

This total remittance rate includes any local lodging taxes and short-term rental specific excise taxes that already apply to the short-term rentals, and additional lodging taxes and sales tax that would apply to them under HB 161.

Short-term rentals already collect and remit lodging tax. Under Section 5739.08 and 5739.09 of the Ohio Revised Code, any property or property owners with five or more rooms listed on short term rental platforms, like Airbnb and VRBO, are already required to collect and

remit lodging tax at the same rate as hotels. And, under section 5739.091 of the Ohio Revised Code, counties, cities, villages and townships are able to broaden their lodging taxes to include establishments with fewer than five rooms.

Furthermore, we would like to see the bill updated to create a central location for tax collections and administration. HB 161 requires short-term rental platforms to collect and remit taxes instead of the hosts. This creates costly and difficult compliance issues as there are over 500 different lodging tax jurisdictions in the state of Ohio with rates that change frequently.

Short term rental properties are now in all 88 counties across the state of Ohio. They are an important part of Ohio's growing tourism economy. Because they are prevalent all across Ohio, we believe there should be a statewide framework for their taxes as HB 161 sets out to create. The Ohio Chamber of Commerce believes there should also be a fair statewide framework for their licensing and regulation. HB 161 only addresses taxes and therefore is incomplete in addressing the overall issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt MacLaren", is positioned above the typed name.

Matt MacLaren, Esq.
Director of Travel and Tourism Policy
Ohio Chamber of Commerce