

JAD DAY SPONSOR TESTIMONY

Chair Ray, Vice Chair Fisher, Ranking Member Brent, and members of the House General Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 14, which proposes to designate September 28 as "Speaker Jo Ann Davidson Day" in Ohio.

This bill has passed the Senate unanimously in both the last General Assembly and this one, a testament to Speaker Davidson's enduring legacy of bringing people together.

Jo Ann Davidson's journey from a local volunteer in Reynoldsburg to becoming the first and only woman Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives embodies the very best of public service. She began with grassroots engagement, making phone calls and planting yard signs—proving that local efforts can lead to the highest offices in our state.

What makes Speaker Davidson's legacy particularly meaningful is not just that she broke barriers, but how she led once those barriers were broken. During her tenure from 1995 to 2000, she demonstrated that effective governance transcends partisan divisions. She taught us that leadership is not about wielding power but about using it to open doors for others.

Her impact extends far beyond her time as Speaker. Through the Jo Ann Davidson Ohio Leadership Institute, she has helped prepare over 400 women for public service and leadership roles, including myself. This multiplier effect continues to strengthen our institutions at every level of government.

While this bill is simple, its message is profound. By designating her birthday, September 28, as Speaker Jo Ann Davidson Day, we remind future generations that there is no ceiling too high to break, no office too powerful to achieve. We affirm that public service is not about personal achievement alone, but about creating opportunities for others to follow.

In today's political climate, Speaker Davidson's example of collaborative leadership and bipartisan cooperation is more relevant than ever. She showed us that bringing people together isn't just an ideal—it's essential for effective governance.

In closing, I respectfully ask for your support of Senate Bill 14 to commemorate and honor the legacy of Speaker Jo Ann Davidson—a true

public servant and an inspiration to all who knew her. Let us honor not only her historic achievement as the first woman Speaker of the House, but also her enduring commitment to mentorship, civic engagement, and bridge-building across party lines. This recognition will serve as an annual reminder that in Ohio, principled leadership and unwavering public service can elevate any community servant to the pinnacle of state leadership.

Thank you for your consideration, and I am happy to answer any questions at this time.