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Before the General Government Committee

House Bill 244 – Designate Women’s History Month

Sponsor testimony provided by Representative Michele Grim

May 13th, 2024

Chair Ray, Vice Chair Fischer, Ranking Member Brent and all members of the General Government committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony regarding House Bill 244, which would designate the month of March as Women’s History Month. I would also like to thank my joint-sponsor Representative Brown Piccolantonio.

Officially designating March as Women’s History Month is an opportunity to acknowledge the accomplishments and efforts of women from the variety of diverse communities that make Ohio one of a kind. Women from the foothills of Appalachia to the shores of Lake Erie, and everywhere in between have come to define the hardworking, compassionate, and strong-willed communities of our state.

This is not limited to a partisan or gender-based issue, I’m sure every member of this committee can think of a woman in their community, or life, who has had an enormously positive impact.

Personally, a local figure comes to mind, Senator Marigene Valiquette, she is one of many women across this state that broke barriers but is nearly always forgotten in the story of Ohio’s history. As the longest serving female legislator in the history of Ohio, Marigene Valiquette should be remembered for many accomplishments. She was a trailblazing legislator, Senate Minority Floor Leader, presidential delegate, and chairman of the Judiciary, and Ways and Means committees.

During the years of her service from 1963 to 1986, what it meant to be a woman in the public eye was fundamentally changing, **at times in her career she was the only woman in the entire State Senate**. Senator Valiquette ferociously advocated for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, which Ohio did finally ratify in 1974.

We can and should be doing more to honor the historical impact women have had on the state of Ohio, from all backgrounds. Ohio’s strength is in its people, and that most certainly includes the women who have been leading, advocating, and organizing during its storied history. Designating a month to honoring this will be one step to fostering more growth for all women going forward.

Chair Ray, Vice Chair Fischer, Ranking Member Brent and all members of the General Government committee, thank you so much again for the opportunity to share testimony.