

House General Government Committee
May 20, 2025
H.B. 244 Proponent Testimony

Chair Ray, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking member Brent and the members of the House General Government Committee.

I am Tamara Howard, and I serve as Director of Advocacy of YWCA Columbus. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for House Bill 244, a bill that will designate March as Women's History Month.

For 139 years, YWCA Columbus has been at the forefront of justice, equity, and empowerment, working tirelessly to meet critical needs in housing, childcare, women's leadership, and racial justice. Our legacy is built on the courage of the women who came before us—leaders who opened Franklin County's first public childcare and kindergarten programs, desegregated our downtown dining facility in 1938, housed Japanese American families facing detainment, led Ohio's ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, and established the first shelter dedicated to unhoused families in our community.

We urge you to support legislation designating March as Women's History Month, a formal recognition of the vital contributions women have made throughout history—many of whom have been overlooked or erased from mainstream narratives.

By supporting this legislation, you affirm the significance of recognizing and uplifting women's contributions throughout Ohio's history. It reinforces the power of education and awareness, ensuring that the achievements of trailblazing women are acknowledged and elevated. It strengthens advocacy and equity, driving policies that uphold justice, dignity, and opportunity for all women. And it fosters community and leadership, inspiring future generations to continue the fight for progress and systemic change.

This designation is not only a celebration, but a commitment to honoring women's voices and addressing the systemic inequities that persist today. Your support is a commitment to a more inclusive and equitable future.

By championing this legislation, you affirm that history must be inclusive, that representation matters, and that honoring women's contributions strengthens our communities. YWCA Columbus remains steadfast in our commitment to building a future where women, families, and communities thrive, and where all voices are heard and valued. We ask for your leadership in advancing this legislation—ensuring that women's history is recognized as an integral part of our shared story.