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House General Government Committee
Sponsor Testimony – H.R. 139
June 10, 2025

Chair Ray, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Brent, and all honorable members of the House General Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Resolution 139 to honor Pope Leo XIV on his election as the first American Pope.

Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost was elected as the 267th Pope in a continuous line back to Peter in May 2025, becoming the first Pope from the United States and North America. A son of the Midwest, Pope Leo XIV was born in Chicago and completed his bachelor's degree at Villanova University in Pennsylvania; he later received his theological education at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

The first pontiff from the Augustinian order, Pope Leo XIV gained extensive international experience in his subsequent service at an Augustinian mission in Peru. He was appointed bishop of Chiclayo, Peru in 2015, appointed archbishop eight years later, and then created a cardinal by Pope Francis. Following Pope Francis' hospitalization earlier this year, then-Cardinal Prevost presided over the March 3 Rosary for the Pope in St. Peter's Square.

With the selection of his papal name, Leo, and the ties to the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* issued by Pope Leo XIII, we are encouraged and reminded to work for the policies that recognize the dignity of work and the primacy of the family, policies which we seek to promote here in Ohio.

Pope Leo XIV has proven himself to be a spiritual leader of tremendous ability, and his faith community around the world looks forward to his wisdom and stewardship. Furthermore, his election as Pope is of historical significance to the United States and Midwest, particularly the nearly 2 million Catholics in our home state. A man born in Illinois and educated in Pennsylvania, who very likely drove the turnpike from Villanova to Chicago familiar to many in our state and region, rises to the title of the Vicar of Christ and the spiritual leader of 1.4 billion Catholics worldwide.

We would like to thank each of our co-sponsors for joining us to introduce this resolution in honor of Pope Leo XIV and the historical significance of his election. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and we are happy to answer any questions.