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State Representative Joshua E. Williams
Ohio House of Representatives

Chair Hall, Vice-Chair Ferguson, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 166 today.

HB 166 is long overdue in Ohio. This bill is a testament to the lasting impact of Harriet Tubman's actions before, during, and after the Civil War. Her commitment to liberty and justice for all is a shining light amidst the darkest chapter in American history.

Born into slavery in Maryland in March of 1822, Tubman escaped to Philadelphia in late 1849. Not content with just her own freedom, she led around 13 expeditions back into Maryland to guide slaves to freedom in the northern United States and ultimately Canada. By rescuing around 70 slaves in a period of 11 years, including her parents, brothers, sisters in law, nieces, and nephews, Tubman became known as "Moses", in reference to the biblical figure who freed Hebrews from slavery in Egypt.

Throughout this period, Tubman was also active in larger-scale abolition efforts. Introduced to John Brown in 1858, she assisted his efforts in organizing a widespread slave rebellion in Harpers Ferry, Virginia. 4 years later, she volunteered to support the Union cause in

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the Civil War. She served as a nurse and helped refugees in camps in the south. Eventually, due to her vast knowledge of the Underground Railroad and covert travel techniques, Tubman worked as a scout for the Union army. She mapped unfamiliar southern terrain for the Secretary of War and provided intelligence for various raids and assaults on Confederate strongholds.

After the war, Tubman received very little pay for her service. She settled in Auburn, New York and lived in poverty on her farm, tending to her family and others in need. She later worked to promote women's suffrage. Unfortunately, she passed away on March 10th, 1913, before this dream became a reality.

HB 166 would establish March 10th as Harriet Tubman Day in Ohio, commemorating the date of her death in 1913. Symbolically introduced on the 112th anniversary of her death, this bill would recognize the important work that Harriet Tubman did for enslaved Americans and the country at large. It is time Ohio honors the legacy of a great American who stopped at nothing to ensure that all were free, no matter the color of their skin. Chairman Hall, Vice-Chair Ferguson, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of HB 166 today. I welcome any questions you may have.

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