



**JEAN SCHMIDT
STATE REPRESENTATIVE**

Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you for allowing us to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 578, which will ensure the reporting of various tick-related diseases and conditions to the Department of Health.

House Bill 578 is a simple piece of legislation that takes many of the tick-related diseases found in the Ohio Administrative Code and places them more permanently in the Ohio Revised Code to ensure that they are consistently reported. We believe that these diseases are important to consistently be reported and not risk their elimination through the rulemaking process. Ticks are a year-round problem and, while I thought they may not be around during the winter cold, they continue to be active in non-freezing temperatures.

This legislation takes the importance of tracking these tick-related conditions one step further by reporting conditions that can arise out of a tick bite, including Alpha-gal syndrome and Southern tick-associated rash illness. Although these are not classified as infectious diseases under national guidelines, we believe they are important enough to report and track. The Department of Health currently maintains an [infectious disease reporting dashboard](#) and [tick population maps](#). This information is vital for research purposes, but more importantly it can help Ohioans to understand the need to be cautious of tick bites and have a better understanding of where these issues may arise.

I believe that data is an important tool in combating the health risks associated with tick bites and House Bill 578 builds upon already established foundations for doing so. We appreciate your time and are happy to answer any questions you may have.