

Proponent Testimony for HB113 On Annexation; Local Government Committee

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Owner of the historic Staley Mill Farm and Indian Creek Distillery. I am also President of the Elizabeth Township Historical Society, Miami County Ohio (Ohio's largest historic district as listed on the National Register of Historic Places) and a Board member of the Miami County Farm Bureau.

Chairwoman King, Vice Chair Kishman, Ranking Member Sims, and members of the Local Government Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in support of HB113** annexation reform.

My heart and my soul belong to the land. This land, my land, my farmstead of 160 acres that my 3rd great grandfather purchased in 1820 here in Bethel Township, Miami County, Ohio. It was and is a place I call home as did six generations before me. A place "away from the maddening crowd". A refuge you might say. A land where Pioneer ingenuity can be seen; a Pioneer Agricultural/ Industrial Complex. In fact, the ONLY one remaining in America still intact with the original family, with the original buildings, with the original acreage. How might you ask, has this farmstead remained intact, the same all these centuries? Because generations of my family valued the land and the history more than what the changing so called "modern" society around them could offer by "selling out".

And I, like the majority of my neighbors (especially my farm friends) enjoy their rural home "away from it all". Working the land, producing with their hands and bearing witness to an old-fashioned way of life that surrounds

them, embraces them with rewards that are not monetary. One that is tied to the land, loving it, nurturing it, stewarding it, not exploiting it...

Annexation is changing the landscape of Miami County and of America; one house, one development at a time. Devouring precious land that has been farmed for generations, sometimes by the same family, year after year until someone dies and greed becomes the driving force which all too often is the case which the cities view as opportunity. With the passing of HB113, we will have a louder voice as to what takes place in our rural communities and our vanishing lands. Especially, if the area in question is like ours, where we are elbow to elbow with a city that wishes to eat away at our beautiful landscape and way of life for taxes, self- promotion, with eyes blind and hearts that are closed to the way things were- the way we wish things to remain- the same!

Rural, not density of population just because you can. And I speak of developers, builders, and individuals who do not care about the American life. Considering the lifestyle of others who live out there, in the "townships". Out here in the heartland.

Let us not forget that this is America the Beautiful! The land of amber waves of grain. If the annexation of farmland is not throttled, then America loses. Not to what America was founded on, but to a cold, money driven, tasteless blight on our landscapes. Where beauty of the view that surrounds us is forgotten and ignored for monopoly houses stacked back-to-back on Marvin Gardens Ave. in a game where no one wins.

Let's not sell out. Let's not forget that there is more to life than money. I hope that my short essay touches your hearts today and you will seriously consider saving our vanishing rural America. Our lands' future and the future of Ohio depends on YOU!

Thank you, Chairwoman King and committee members, for hearing my testimony today and thank you for the work you do for our state.