

44th House District

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State Representative Joshua E. Williams
Ohio House of Representatives

Chairwoman Abrams, Vice-Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the House Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 281 today.

HB 281 contains the changes necessary for Ohio to keep up with the increased illegal immigration we have seen in the past few years, and the current administration's attempts to curtail it using ICE and similar agencies. As of now, we are not fully equipped to assist our federal agencies in cracking down on illegal immigration; that's why I have introduced bills like this and House Bills 26, 42, and 282.

HB 281 will require each hospital in our state to permit federal law enforcement officers and agents of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to enter the hospital while performing the following duties: arresting an individual pursuant to a warrant, interviewing an individual, or collecting information/evidence. When attempting to enter, they must demonstrate to the hospital that they are doing so only to enforce federal immigration law.

The hospital's employees are required to facilitate this access provided that the officer or agent demonstrates the necessity of their entrance. Furthermore, the governing board of each hospital is required to adopt a written policy that establishes the standards

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and procedures that must be followed when complying with the bill. They may designate one or more individuals to be the point person for situations like these to verify that the officer is entering for immigration enforcement purposes.

If a hospital is found to be in violation of these provisions, there are two penalty types that could apply. If that hospital has been awarded a grant by a state agency, that agency is prohibited from further distributing any grants to the hospital. If the hospital is a Medicaid provider, the Department of Medicaid must sever the provider agreement with that hospital. Additionally, the bill does not prevent the Ohio Department of Health or OMHAS from imposing any further penalties that they are already permitted to impose through existing law.

This legislation is necessary to update our state's legal framework surrounding illegal immigration and ensure that our federal authorities are able to do their job in Ohio. According to a report from the Congressional Budget Office¹, from 2017-2023, federal and state governments spent almost \$27 billion on Medicaid services for individuals who are ineligible for Medicaid due to their immigration status. Outside of Medicaid costs, uninsured illegal immigrants incur almost \$7 billion in emergency medical services annually², including emergency rooms and ambulance services. This is a massive strain on

¹ https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2024-10/Arrington_Letter_EmergencyMedicaid_Immigration_final.pdf

² https://budget.house.gov/imo/media/doc/the_cost_of_illegal_immigration_to_taxpayers.pdf

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taxpayer dollars; it also proves that these individuals are not just coming here illegally, but using services dedicated to U.S. citizens and taxpayers. By passing and enforcing bills like HB 281, we can ensure that these funds are used on those who follow the law and pay for these services.

Chairwoman Abrams, Vice-Chair Miller, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Public Safety Committee, thank you again for the chance to speak in favor of HB 281. I welcome any questions you may have.

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