Ohio House of Representatives

Representative Adam Mathews
56th House District

Representative DJ Swearingen
89th House District

House Transportation Committee
Sponsor Testimony – H.B. 366
October 28, 2025

Chair Willis, Vice Chair Daniels, Ranking Member Grim, and members of the House Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 366, which makes two clarifying changes to aid in the operation of self-service storage facilities.

The first provision of this bill introduces a process by which the owner of a self-service storage facility may remove and dispose of property stored within in situations when the owner opts to terminate or not renewal the rental agreement. Under current law, owners of storage facilities may only dispose of property stored by tenants in instances of the tenant failing to pay rent; this imposes constraints on how a storage facility owner may handle tenants who have paid rent but should still be removed from the property. For example, an owner may wish to terminate a lease and remove stored property if a tenant is engaging in unlawful activities in their unit, and if they have paid rent, current law does not allow for this.

The second provision of the bill clarifies the liability threshold for damages occurring in a self-service storage facility. Under current law, if a rental agreement contains a provision specifying the maximum value of property stored in the unit, that value becomes the maximum amount of damages able to be recovered from the owner in an insurance claim or civil suit in the event of damage occurring to the property. Current law states that this limit does not apply in the event of damage occurring due to negligence on the part of the owner; this bill replaces that negligence standard to one of willful or wanton misconduct by the owner.

In law, negligence refers to the failure to behave with the level of care that a reasonable person would have exercised under the same circumstances, while willful or wanton misconduct refers to conscious and intentional disregard of and indifference to the rights and safety of others which the defendant know or should know is reasonably likely to result in injury, damage, or other harm. Put simply, this bill raises the standard by which the limit on damages may not be applied, which exposes the owners to potentially significantly more liability, to instances of deliberate disregard for a tenant's property.

By affording owners of self-service storage facilities an additional option to protect their facilities from potential abuse and strengthening their protection against elevated liability, this bill assists storage unit owners in operating in Ohio. Both provisions have passed the House previously: both passed the House in SB206 from Civil Justice last General Assembly, and the maximum value provision also passed the House in last General Assembly's budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and we are happy to answer any questions the committee may have.