

Testimony on the protection of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund

Chair, Manchester and members of the Government Oversight Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the importance of preserving the current structure of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund. As someone working directly with Ohio families in crisis, I urge you not to change the way funding flows into the Trust Fund. Altering this system would have devastating consequences—especially for Ohio’s most vulnerable counties. In just four of our poorest counties, the proposed changes would jeopardize over \$6 million in annual funding. That is money these communities cannot afford to lose.

We are in the midst of a housing crisis. Now is not the time to fragment or weaken a system that is already under immense pressure. If anything, the Trust Fund must be protected and expanded to meet the growing needs of our communities.

Shifting to a county-by-county system would force local commissioners to stretch already limited resources, fragment our response, and weaken the state as a whole. The Trust Fund is more than just a line item—it is a pillar holding up essential services for underserved populations. It fills critical service gaps for children, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and countless families.

The most heartbreaking impact is on our children. In my work, I have seen a shocking rise in the number of families living in cars, tents, rest stops, state parks, backyards, and factory parking lots. These are not just statistics—these are kids showing up to school after a night without a safe place to sleep.

According to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce, 25,550 students in Ohio experienced homelessness during the 2023–2024 school year. That number is staggering. These children must remain at the forefront of your mind as you consider any changes to the Trust Fund. A fragmented, county-based approach will erode the state’s ability to respond to such widespread need—and the burden will fall hardest on the youngest among us.

If we alter the funding flow of the Trust Fund now, the ripple effects will become a tsunami—one that crushes communities that are already struggling. Weakening the Trust Fund weakens our collective ability to house children and families. In a time of crisis, we must strengthen, not dismantle, the systems that are working.

I urge you to preserve the current statewide funding structure of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund. Strengthening this pillar is one of the most important steps we can take to protect our people and uphold our values.

Respectfully,

Alexis McKee

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