



Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Willa Bluestone, and I serve as the Director of Policy at Ohio Life Sciences, the statewide industry association representing more than 4,900 life sciences establishments across Ohio. Our members include biotechnology and medical device companies, research institutions, hospitals, manufacturers, investors, and academic partners that together form the foundation of Ohio’s growing life sciences ecosystem.

Ohio Life Sciences appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 111, and I want to thank Senators Johnson and Craig for their leadership in sponsoring this legislation.

Designating October 4 as “Henrietta Lacks Day” is both a symbolic and substantive step toward recognizing the ethical and human dimensions of biomedical innovation. Henrietta Lacks’ legacy extends beyond her unparalleled contribution to science; her story reminds us that the advancement of medicine must always be paired with integrity, transparency, and respect for individual rights. For an industry built on discovery and trust, those values are not peripheral—they are foundational.

From a workforce perspective, this designation also provides a meaningful educational touchpoint. Across Ohio, biotechnology and health science programs—from high schools to research universities—teach students about Henrietta Lacks’ story as part of the scientific and ethical framework of modern biomedical research. Official recognition of this day reinforces that learning, connecting ethics to innovation in a tangible way for the next generation of scientists, technicians, and clinicians.

In the broader policy context, Senate Bill 111 complements Ohio’s strategic efforts to position itself as a national leader in life sciences. As the state invests in talent pipelines, research infrastructure, and bioscience manufacturing capacity, it is equally important to highlight the values that underpin responsible innovation. Acknowledging Henrietta Lacks’ contribution sends a clear signal that Ohio’s leadership in science is matched by its commitment to ethical excellence.

Finally, this designation invites collaboration among public, private, and educational partners. It offers an opportunity for institutions, companies, and community organizations to host programs that honor Henrietta Lacks’ life and foster dialogue about research equity, health disparities, and the trust that sustains scientific progress.

Ohio Life Sciences strongly supports Senate Bill 111. It represents the kind of thoughtful recognition that aligns with our industry’s mission—to improve lives through innovation, grounded in respect for the people who make that progress possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Respectfully,  
Willa Bluestone  
Director of Policy  
Ohio Life Sciences