



Senate Bill 145 Joint Sponsor Testimony
State Senator Michele Reynolds & Senator Hearcel Craig

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Timken, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Housing Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on **Senate Bill 145**, alongside my colleague and joint sponsor, **Senator Hearcel Craig**. Together, we are proud to present this bold step forward in how Ohio approaches housing, development, and community building.

As you all know, during the last General Assembly, this committee traveled across the state, listening directly to Ohioans about the housing challenges they face. We heard them loud and clear — from rising costs to limited availability, from barriers to homeownership to the urgent need for neighborhood revitalization.

We compiled our findings and issued recommendations, and I'm proud to say that several of those recommendations are reflected right here in **Senate Bill 145**.

This bill does several important things:

- It **renames** the Ohio Department of Development to the **Department of Housing and Development**, elevating housing as a top priority in our state's strategy.
- It **strengthens coordination** among housing programs, community planning, and economic initiatives.

- It creates an **Ohio Housing Dashboard** to provide real-time data and transparency on housing needs and progress.
- It establishes an **Ohio Housing Toolkit** to give local governments and developers the resources they need to build and rehabilitate homes more efficiently.
- It **enhances financial assistance** programs to support housing construction, rehabilitation, emergency housing needs, and home refinancing.

On the surface, renaming a department might seem like a simple change. But make no mistake: **words matter**. And this change sends a strong, unmistakable message: **Ohio welcomes housing**.

Ohio is ready to lead. Ohio is ready to build. And Ohio is ready to ensure that every family, every senior, every worker, and every child has the opportunity to call a safe and affordable place *home* — and to make their version of the American Dream come true.

We know that housing is the foundation for everything else — for jobs, for education, for health, and for economic mobility. By renaming and restructuring the department, we are placing housing where it belongs: **at the center** of our development strategy.

Under SB 145:

- The newly named Department will guide housing development, community planning, and economic programs in a more **coordinated and powerful way**.

- Our **Ohio Housing Finance Agency** will continue to deliver critical programs like tax credits and homebuyer assistance, while the Department expands financial help for emergency needs, construction, rehabilitation, and refinancing.
- We will create an **Ohio Housing Dashboard** — putting real data in the hands of decision-makers — and an **Ohio Housing Toolkit** to help local governments and developers cut through red tape and deliver projects faster and better.

This bill also establishes **new coordination among state agencies** to break down silos and align our efforts, and it sets **clear accountability** through annual reports so that we can track progress and stay focused on results.

Senate Bill 145 is about building the future of Ohio. It's about turning our housing challenges into opportunities — opportunities for new homes, for good-paying jobs, for vibrant communities, and for renewed hope. As Chair of this committee, I know each of you shares this commitment.

At this time, I would like to invite my joint sponsor, **Senator Craig**, to say a few words.

Senator Hearcel Craig – Joint Sponsor Testimony on SB 145

Thank you, Senator Reynolds, and thank you, Madam Chairwoman and members of this esteemed committee, for the privilege to join you today in support of **Senate Bill 145**.

As my colleague so powerfully stated, this bill is about more than administrative structure — it's about **people**. It's about ensuring that every Ohioan, no matter their zip code, their income, or their background, has the opportunity to live with dignity in a home they can afford.

Throughout my years in public service, I have seen firsthand what stable, quality housing can do. It **stabilizes families**, it **anchors neighborhoods**, and it gives children the foundation they need to learn, grow, and succeed. Housing is the gateway to opportunity — a basic need that unlocks economic mobility and community prosperity.

Yet too many Ohioans today are struggling — with rising rents, high property taxes, limited options, and barriers that prevent them from achieving the American dream of homeownership. That's why this legislation is so critical. By renaming the Department and placing housing at the forefront, we are acknowledging that the **well-being of our people** must be at the center of our development efforts.

Senate Bill 145 will empower the state to:

- **Better coordinate** resources and programs to meet the housing needs of our urban neighborhoods, our rural communities, and our Appalachian towns alike.
- Provide **tools and data** to our local governments so they can plan smartly and build inclusively.
- Deliver **targeted financial assistance** — not only for big projects but also for the families and individuals who just need a helping hand to

stay in their homes or buy their first home.

This is our chance to send a clear signal: **Ohio is open for housing.** Ohio is ready to build pathways to prosperity for all.

This is our moment to rise to the occasion — to align our policies with our values, and to ensure that every Ohioan has a place they are proud to call home.

Senator Reynolds and I stand united in asking for your support on **Senate Bill 145**. Together, we can make Ohio a national leader in housing innovation and community development.

Thank you, and we are both happy to answer any questions.