



Memorandum

To: Chairman Reynolds, Vice Chair Timken, Ranking Member Craig, and Members of the Ohio Senate Housing Committee

From: Orion Bell, CEO

Date: May 12, 2025

Subject: Testimony in support of SB 184 (Reynolds) Create Residential Development Districts, Housing grant program.

Chairman Reynolds, Vice Chair Timken, Ranking Member Craig, and Members of the Ohio Senate Housing Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written **testimony in support of SB 184 (Reynolds) Create Residential Development Districts, Housing grant program.**

Benjamin Rose is a Cleveland based nonprofit organization whose mission is to serve as a trusted partner in the aging journey for individuals of all backgrounds as well as those who care for them. Since 1908, the skilled and compassionate professionals at Benjamin Rose have supported the aging journeys of adults and their families through the discovery, development and delivery of accessible programs and services that ensure each person is heard, treated with dignity, and positioned for a better tomorrow. Benjamin Rose services promote health and wellbeing, support housing and homeownership, and enhance financial wellness. In addition, we are an independent, applied research institution that addresses everyday issues faced by older people and their families. We use this knowledge to develop innovative solutions and foster informed engagement on issues impacting the field of aging. In 2024, more than 170,000 individuals accessed a service provided by Benjamin Rose. Many of the people served by Benjamin Rose in Ohio are low-income, with an average household income of \$16,000 per year.

We applaud SB 184 and its focus on encouraging new, affordable housing options in Ohio. Rising costs of home ownership for first-time homebuyers, and rising rental expenses are a result of shortage of housing stock. The bill addresses factors that discourage or prevent new home construction.

We appreciate the recognition that investments in housing and development require coordination with local county, township and municipal entities, and the bill's efforts to encourage these entities support for new housing in their jurisdictions.



Let's rethink aging.

We recognize the emphasis in the bill on promoting home ownership. Home ownership and home equity help build household wealth and promote stability in neighborhoods. Home ownership encourages residents to have an "equity stake" in their communities.

The bill addresses zoning plans that may limit new construction, including "density, setbacks, and lot sizes," as well as parking requirements. We agree that zoning requirements can make it challenging for new construction of modest/affordable single-family homes. The ability to have creative approaches for Ohio's housing issues are welcomed. We look forward to working with Sponsor Reynolds and the Committee to continue to improve Ohio's access to housing. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of SB 184.

Orion H. Bell IV
President & CEO
Benjamin Rose

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