



**Senate Housing Committee**  
**Amy Riegel, Executive Director**  
**May 13, 2025**  
**Senate Bill 184 – Proponent**

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Timken, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the Senate Housing Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 184. COHHIO is a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to ending homelessness and promoting safe, decent, accessible, and fair housing for all Ohioans.

We support Senate Bill 184 because it rightfully places housing at the center of the conversation surrounding economic development in our state. Ohio's relatively affordable housing compared to other states has been an important selling point in landing major economic development deals. This forward-looking legislation encourages local governments to reduce barriers to housing so that people working in and around these projects can afford to live nearby.

Ohio currently has several megaprojects in the works that will need a range of affordable housing options. In addition to the well-paid positions within these planned facilities, these projects will require lower-paid workers to build, clean, maintain, and guard these facilities. They will also produce significant ancillary economic development that will result in many low-wage service jobs in nearby restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores, hotels, and retail stores.

People working in lower wage jobs face the highest barriers to housing. Only two out of Ohio's 10 most common jobs actually pay enough for renters to afford a basic two-bedroom apartment. This explains why Ohio has a shortage of 264,083 affordable units available to the state's 438,108 extremely low-income renters; a ratio of only 40 units per 100 households.

This legislation, with some thoughtful adjustments, has the potential to alleviate such severe housing insecurity near major economic development projects, which drive the cost of housing even further out of reach for low-wage workers. We encourage the bill's incentives to be targeted toward lower income households to ensure that everyone benefits from increased housing supply that will result from the proposed incentives.

Intentional income targeting is important because most housing markets already have an adequate supply of housing for middle-income households, but no market in Ohio has enough units for extremely low-income renters. While only 1% of Ohio's middle-income renters spend over half their income on rent, 71% of extremely low-income renters are severely housing cost burdened. As SB 184 moves through the process, we would respectfully recommend adding language to target the proposed grant program

toward housing development that will be affordable for lower-wage workers who create vibrant, enduring, secure communities out of economic development deals.

We also support the bill's incentives for cities to update their zoning codes and reduce red tape, which too often prevent the development of multi-family affordable housing and prioritize large sprawling single-family homes that are unaffordable to the majority of Ohio's workforce. We would recommend adding some of the other pro-housing incentives that the Senate Select Committee on Housing recommended last year, such as strengthening tenant protections to allow local governments to hold bad actors accountable and help people find responsible landlords willing to rent to them.

We appreciate Sen. Reynolds' efforts to ensure that major economic development projects can benefit everyone working and living nearby. With changes to focus the proposed housing grant program toward affordability and additional incentives to protect tenants, Senate Bill 184 will incorporate housing into Ohio's long-term economic development strategy. We share the vision that a safe, decent, affordable home is the foundation of strong families and vibrant communities that will provide the healthy and productive workforce that businesses need.