



OHIO SENATE HOUSING COMMITTEE

Written Proponent Testimony Senate Bill 184

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

My name is Kent Scarrett, and I serve as the executive director of the Ohio Municipal League. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony regarding the Ohio Municipal League's position on Senate Bill 184, legislation to create a grant program for municipalities and other local governments to receive further funding to increase the state's housing supply.

OML represents more than 730 municipalities. Our membership is a diverse array of communities from the largest Ohio cities down to villages of under 100 residents. Every community has its own unique character, culture, and challenges, including a wide variety of challenges related to housing.

From a municipal perspective, this issue – to a great extent – comes down to the financial resources that are available to help alleviate the problem, prepare sites, and update zoning codes and expectations related to residential buildings.

Senate Bill 184 is aimed at creating residential economic development district (REDD) grants in areas that are within a 20-mile radius of major economic development projects. Projects like this are meaningful to municipalities but also create added challenges that municipalities must overcome. Residential development is often essential to house the needed workforce at such locations.

OML has a goal to support and facilitate the development of a broad spectrum of safe, affordable housing while providing municipalities with the authority and flexibility they need to be most successful. The REDD grants offered through SB184 provide incentives for local governments to further address the state's housing supply shortage – rather than mandates.

The legislation would allow for municipalities to receive funding through the newly created grant program at the Ohio Department of Development, which lets the department work out many of the details in order to best accommodate pro-housing policies at the local level. These various policies are wide-ranging and can accommodate municipalities of various sizes, geographies, and interests.

We appreciate Chair Reynolds for sponsoring this thoughtful legislation and the incentivized approach on which the bill is based. We are grateful to this committee for its work to address Ohio's housing crisis and urge for the passage of this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 184.