



Senate Housing Committee
Senate Bill 250
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First Year Cleveland
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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 250. My name is Angela Newman-White, and I am the Executive Director of First Year Cleveland. Our mission is to mobilize the community through partnerships and a unified strategy to reduce infant deaths. We are committed to ensuring that every baby lives to see their first birthday, and every mother has the resources and support to celebrate that milestone.

Between 2017-2023, in Cuyahoga County, there were 759 infant and 595 fetal deaths. This means over 1,350 families experienced the devastation of loss. These numbers reflect what we know to be true statewide: healthy births and infant survival depend not only on healthcare, but on safe, stable, and affordable housing.

Families facing housing instability are at higher risk for poor birth outcomes, stress-related complications, and limited access to consistent prenatal care. In many of the neighborhoods where infant mortality is most concentrated, families have very few opportunities to achieve affordable homeownership. For families trying to build stability, ownership represents more than housing - it's security, community, and a foundation for health.

SB 250 recognizes the critical connection between housing stability and family health outcomes. As costs rise while wages remain stagnant, far too many families are struggling to survive and thrive. The current minimum wage in Ohio is \$10.70 an hour, or roughly \$22,000 a year for full-time work. Yet, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, a single mother would need to earn \$42,293 annually to afford a modest two-bedroom apartment. That means she would have to work 80 hours a week just to keep her housing costs at the recommended 30% of income.

Access to affordable, stable housing is not just an economic issue - it is a maternal and infant health issue. By authorizing a nonrefundable, transferable tax credit for organizations that facilitate the development of owner-occupied housing on land they own, SB 250 provides a practical and scalable way to mobilize underutilized community assets for family housing.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify today. Ensuring housing stability for families is one of the most effective ways to improve birth outcomes and reduce infant mortality across Ohio. SB 250 moves our state toward a future where every baby has a healthy start, and every family has a stable home. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.