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Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Reynolds, members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 72.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Bill 72, the Ohio False Claims Act. I will be brief because thankfully my colleague was able to do a lot of the heavy lifting by so clearly explaining This bill. But as Senator Hicks-Hudson said, this bill is modeled after the successful federal False Claims Act and similar laws in 36 other states, which offers a powerful method for detecting fraud and recovering taxpayer funds from bad actors. The federal False Claims Act has been effect for over 160 years and has been incredibly popular and supported in a bipartisan fashion the entire time. Ohio remains one of the few states that has yet to adopt this legislation, meaning Ohio taxpayers continue to lose millions of dollars each year due to fraud that could be prevented with such a law.

The Ohio False Claims Act would empower citizens to act as whistleblowers, allowing them to file lawsuits against fraudsters and potentially receive a reward for successful cases. It also offers protection for whistleblowers to ensure they can report fraud without fear. This bill would not only enable Ohio to recover millions of dollars annually but also ensure that a larger portion of those funds stay within the state, providing direct benefits to Ohioans. By adopting this bill, Ohio would align itself with other states in holding wrongdoers accountable and increase transparency in government operations. The bill also brings attention to fraud cases that may otherwise go unnoticed, such as the role pharmaceutical manufacturers played in the opioid crisis, which has devastated Ohio. Passing SB 72 is an essential step toward protecting taxpayer dollars and ensuring accountability in state spending.

Thank you, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.