

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 155

Submitted by Mary Vedda, Realtor

24526 Nobottom Road, Olmsted Township, Ohio 44138

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Mary Vedda, and I have proudly served as a licensed Realtor in Ohio for the past 27 years. I work with Keller Williams Living, and throughout my career, I have experienced the full spectrum of the real estate market — from the highs of a booming market to the lows of the mortgage crisis, during which I represented banks in the sale of foreclosed homes. I have seen firsthand how vulnerable buyers and sellers can be taken advantage of — then by predatory mortgage brokers, and now, increasingly, by unregulated real estate wholesalers.

Today, I share with you the experience of my client, Mr. Glenn Hardin, and my own professional encounter with a wholesaler — an experience that underscores the need for the protections proposed in Senate Bill 155.

Mr. Hardin had been attempting to sell his home for several years. I originally listed the property in November 2017. We entered into a lease-purchase agreement with tenants who, despite repeated efforts and ample time, were ultimately unable to complete the purchase.

In March 2022, Mr. Hardin informed me he had been approached by a wholesaler — Atlantic Real Estate Properties LLC — offering \$195,000 in cash, with the condition that the tenants could remain in the home. Concerned about the legitimacy of this company, I conducted research and found that properties advertised in their marketing emails were still listed in the names of the original owners, months after being "contracted."

I contacted the title company involved — TitleCo Title — who assured me that Atlantic did close on their contracts. Based on that, Mr. Hardin proceeded.

The wholesaler advertised the property to other buyers at \$240,000, with no mention of assigning the contract — a red flag. After 60 days without success, they asked for an extension. Their new marketing price was \$225,000, still without a buyer. Eventually, Atlantic sent a so-called “finance officer” who told Mr. Hardin the offer needed to be revised down to \$175,000.

Importantly, the original contract for \$195,000 was, in our view, binding. It contained no assignment clause and explicitly required the buyer to deposit earnest money within 48 hours. This never occurred. TitleCo confirmed no earnest money had been received. Therefore, Mr. Hardin had no compensation for the buyer’s failure to perform. According to the signed agreement, the seller should have received the earnest money in the event of buyer default.

Additionally, the contract included an excessively restrictive clause preventing the seller from selling the property to any buyer introduced by Atlantic for two years — an unreasonable burden.

The mutual release form stated that the “asking price was too high and our financial partner did not agree.” However, the price in the contract was not a seller’s asking price — it was the buyer’s offer.

After terminating the agreement, I re-listed the property on May 14, 2022, for \$195,000. Within eight days, we received multiple offers, ultimately selling for \$210,000 — significantly more than the wholesaler’s revised \$175,000 offer.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case. I, too, have been repeatedly targeted by wholesalers attempting to purchase properties I own with low mortgage balances. These solicitations — via phone, text, email, and voicemail — are relentless. Now, imagine the impact on elderly or uninformed homeowners who may not have the resources or experience to protect themselves.

Wholesalers are operating in a legal gray area, and it is our duty to ensure vulnerable property owners are not misled or manipulated by deceptive practices.

I respectfully urge you to support Senate Bill 155. It provides critical protections for Ohio’s homeowners and brings transparency and accountability to a segment of the market that has gone unchecked for too long.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Vedda

Realtor, Keller Williams Living