

Senate Local Government Committee
Proponent Testimony
Senate Bill 104
March 5, 2025

Good morning, Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, and members of the Senate Local Government Committee, my name is Kelly Meyer, an independent real estate broker and past President of Realtor Alliance of Greater Cincinnati.

I am here to express my strong support for Ohio Senate Bill 104, which protects private property rights and promotes economic opportunities by preventing local governments from imposing unreasonable restrictions on short-term rentals.

As a REALTOR, I've witnessed firsthand how these rentals can enhance a community. Short-term rentals bring in visitors who are excited to explore our state, and in doing so, they support small businesses, from local restaurants to shops and entertainment venues. Restricting these rentals not only undermines our rights as property owners but also stifles the potential for economic growth in our communities.

Private Property Rights Violation

First and foremost, local bans on short-term rentals infringe on private property rights, a core principle our country was founded on. As homeowners, we make significant investments in our properties. We work to maintain them, pay property taxes, and contribute to our neighborhoods. Yet, in some Ohio municipalities, local governments have effectively decided that we can't use our properties as we see fit if we want to offer them for short-term stays.

Consider the example of Orange Township, Ohio, where short-term rental bans have been imposed. Families who had invested in homes with the intention of using them as vacation rentals suddenly found their investments in jeopardy. These property owners, who thought they'd be able to generate income through rentals, now find themselves restricted, unable to utilize their property as planned and facing potential financial strain. This is not just a denial of a business opportunity; it is a fundamental infringement on what it means to own property in a free society.

Negative Impact on Local Economies

Beyond individual property rights, restrictions on short-term rentals also harm local economies. According to a study by Airbnb, in 2019 alone, the short-term rental industry contributed over \$24 million to Ohio's economy. This spending benefits not just the rental hosts but also countless small businesses, which rely on tourists and visitors for their livelihood.

Take, for instance, small towns like Hocking Hills. Tourists who come to stay in short-term rentals explore local hiking trails, eat at family-owned restaurants, and shop at local stores. When you restrict short-term rentals, you also restrict the revenue streams for these small businesses. Imagine the impact on a small-town diner that depends on weekend visitors filling their tables. Local bans on short-term rentals strip away that essential income, and for many small businesses, that can be the difference between staying open or closing.

Burden on Ohioans and Harm to Communities

Overly restrictive regulations on short-term rentals are also burdensome for individual homeowners. These properties are often maintained to a high standard to remain competitive in the rental market. The short-term rentals I have knowledge of strive to ensure that their property is a welcoming place for guests, which means regular maintenance, landscaping, and neighborhood cooperation. Contrary to concerns about short-term rentals harming neighborhoods, responsible hosts are often highly invested in ensuring their properties enhance the community. Short-term rental properties are cleaned, maintained and attended too after each stay. This means these properties have significantly more attention paid to them than most other type properties.

Moreover, short-term properties are reviewed regularly by the party renting them. It is in the best interest of the owner to maintain the property at the highest possible level, to achieve and sustain a high rating from their customers.

In some communities, like Cleveland, restrictions have gone so far as to limit even modest, short-term rentals in residential neighborhoods. Hosts in these areas feel the strain of regulations that limit the number of rental days per year or mandate extensive licensing processes. The added administrative costs and regulatory hoops drive many hosts away, while tourists look for other, more welcoming destinations. As a result, Cleveland is estimated to have lost nearly 15% of its short-term rental market, pushing travelers to other states or counties where they can book accommodations freely. This not only diminishes Cleveland's potential tourism revenue but leaves those who would have benefited economically—homeowners, service providers, and local business owners—at a loss.

In Closing

In conclusion, Ohio Senate Bill 104 stands as a necessary protection for private property rights, economic opportunity, and the vibrancy of our local communities. It allows responsible property owners to share their homes and rental property and enhances local businesses by bringing in tourists eager to experience Ohio's hospitality. Restrictive local ordinances hinder this positive impact, and they strip property owners of rights that should be theirs to exercise.

By supporting Senate Bill 104, we support our communities, our small businesses, and the rights of property owners across Ohio. I urge this committee to pass Senate Bill 104, allowing Ohio to remain a place where property rights are respected, and economic opportunity is encouraged.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



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