



OHIO SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

March 12, 2025

Opponent Testimony Senate Bill 104

Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Ohio Senate Local Government Committee:

My name is Bevan Schneck, and I am the Director of Public Affairs at the Ohio Municipal League. On behalf of the league, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on Senate Bill 104, a bill that seeks to retroactively prohibit the local regulation of short-term property rentals.

As a statewide association representing more than 730 of Ohio's cities and villages, we seek to preserve the municipal home rule authority found in Article XVIII of the Ohio Constitution. The powers of local self-government reflect that the best decisions for a community are made closest to home, at the local level. But Senate Bill 104 would keep local decision-makers from making these local decisions.

OML is consistent in its opposition to statewide preemptions. This legislation would prevent municipal officials from creating necessary regulations and block them from being able to decide whether local policies regarding short-term rental properties are in the best interest of their unique community.

Ordinances enacted by a municipality are meant to ensure the safety and welfare of the community, as well as compatibility with land uses. If a municipality enacts regulations or bans short-term rentals, then that reflects the desire of the residents and businesses in that individual city or village. They must be able to regulate where short term rentals are allowed to operate in order to preserve the tranquility of neighbors and protect the rights of property owners. These local zoning laws also provide homeowners with predictability.

To be clear, OML has no position on short-term rentals. While our member communities largely encourage tourism, whether short-term rentals are good or bad – and whether a municipality regulates them or not – must be left up to that municipality.

This bill provides one of the clearest examples in which an issue should remain at the local level. No municipality in the state is the same, and the neighborhoods within them may vary considerably as well. A one-size-fits-all approach from the state is not conducive to good public policy on this issue.

Government closest to the people governs best and allows them to use various tools to address any particular issue, which has been made evident by the wide array of responses on short-term rentals. The preservation of local control is critical because what works for large urban cities does not always work for Ohio's smaller cities or villages.

Remember that any community that has regulations or prohibitions against short-term rentals can always go back and make more allowances for them under the current system. The system offers them flexibility and nimbleness. Likewise, if they have no regulations in place, they can decide at any point to implement something if they feel it is warranted. This includes the ability to quickly put something in place if they see bad actors – whether through Airbnb, Vrbo, or independently – trying to skirt the rules.

We ask you to allow local representatives to do the work they do by taking into consideration all the factors relevant to this issue and how it could impact their community's constituents – much like the members of this committee do at the state level. Therefore, the Ohio Municipal League urges for your opposition to Senate Bill 104.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.