

Patrick A. Ward
Mayor



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Honorable Senator Sandra O'Brien
Local Government Committee
Senate Office Building
1 Capitol Square #125
Columbus, Ohio

Good afternoon, Chairwoman O'Brien and esteemed Members:

My name is Patrick A. Ward and I am the Mayor of the City of Lyndhurst. Our City of Lyndhurst, population 14,050, is comprised of a large elderly population living in modest homes, family neighborhoods close to our parks playgrounds, and schools and a business district which hosts a number of great small businesses. The fabric of our community has been crafted, over time, by reasonable zoning regulations drafted with careful consideration as to how the various zoning districts, even the various residential districts, interact and impact one another.

Over the years, prompted by poor property upkeep and negative neighborhood impacts, it has been necessary for our City to impart reasonable regulations on rental properties, including adopting a process of rental property registration, fees, and inspections which assures tenant safety, neighborhood consistency and provides our Building Department contact information for a responsible party for each rental, be it the owner or property manager, so any issues may be properly addressed.

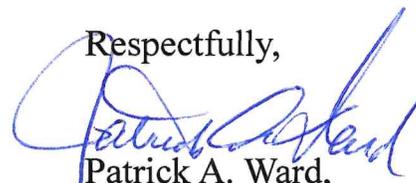
As a Mayor who has walked every street in my City, and who has engaged with many tenants of rental units, the subject of tenant safety and the lack of some owners to be responsive to life/safety concerns is real and is something I and my team take very seriously. Limiting or removing our ability to properly regulate and inspect any and all properties listed for rent would subject prospective tenants to unknown and unmitigated hazards.

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Additionally, transient tenants in certain parts of our City, a bedroom community where homes are very close together, who are unfamiliar with laws, regulations or expectations, can be a source of unnecessary discord which we have largely avoided through the hard work of our dedicated Planning Commissions, over the decades since our City's founding, who have carefully studied the impacts various uses have upon one another and how various types of allowed activities in our different zoning districts, or subsets of districts, interact with one another. The importance of this thought and care cannot be dismissed as it is an inherent right, invested in our local governments, to assure the health, safety, and the welfare of residents across our great State of Ohio.

Protecting the rights of all, safeguarding the welfare of all, dictates we not weigh one property owner's rights over another's. This legislation, as proposed, would remove our local government's ability to properly regulate one class of property owner's rights in the same manner we regulate all, whether they are owner occupied or tenant occupied and no matter the length of tenancy, thus placing those certain property owners in a privileged class. This legislation would also unnecessarily unravel the fabric of our communities, negating the hard work of our Boards and our Councils to the favor of AirBnB business owners, and let's recognize that they are indeed business owners, over the needs of our residents and our communities.

On behalf of my residents, and those in communities across our great State of Ohio, I respectfully request this Committee reject Senate Bill 104 to assure our local governments retain the ability to govern, to do so fairly, and to protect the interests of all property owners equally. I appreciate your consideration and welcome any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

Patrick A. Ward,
Mayor

c: Senator Kent Smith