



## **Senate Bill 208 Sponsor Testimony**

### **State Senator Michele Reynolds**

Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Local Government Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 208, a bill that represents a fiscally responsible, locally-driven approach to addressing Ohio's housing challenges while preserving local control and accountability.

SB 208 embodies what works best in governance: empowering local communities to solve their own problems. This legislation allows counties to address their housing needs without expanding government or creating new burdens on taxpayers. Instead, it ensures that any increases to real estate and manufactured home transfer fees are strategically reinvested into housing initiatives that reflect each community's priorities and values.

Our counties know their communities best. What works in Cuyahoga may not work in Coshocton. Rather than imposing a top-down, bureaucratic solution, SB 208 respects this diversity by allowing each county to direct these dedicated funds toward solutions that make sense locally—whether that's supporting working families, assisting first-time homebuyers, ensuring accessibility for individuals with disabilities, or providing temporary assistance to get people back on their feet.

We face real housing challenges in Ohio. Too many hardworking Ohioans—families, veterans, young adults transitioning to independence, and individuals with disabilities—struggle to find stable housing, not due to a lack of effort or personal responsibility, but because market conditions and resource constraints have created genuine barriers to opportunity.

This bill doesn't expand government or create new taxes. It refocuses existing potential revenue streams with accountability and transparency, ensuring they're invested where they can make the greatest impact: in housing solutions that help people achieve self-sufficiency. It recognizes that counties are closest to their citizens and best positioned to deliver effective, efficient results.

Housing instability isn't just a social concern—it affects workforce development, economic growth, and community stability. When working families struggle to find affordable housing, businesses face challenges in attracting and retaining employees. When veterans can't access stable housing, we fail to honor their service. Smart, targeted investment in housing solutions strengthens our communities and our economy.

By establishing county housing trust funds with clear accountability measures and designating conveyance tax revenues for this purpose, SB 208 empowers counties to address housing challenges efficiently and effectively. This is common-sense legislation that respects local control, maintains fiscal discipline, and addresses real challenges facing Ohio families. It promotes both fiscal stewardship and community strength.

SB 208 is about empowering communities to solve problems at the local level—exactly where solutions work best. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on SB 208. Senator Brenner and I welcome your questions.