

Ohio Senate
Bill Number: Sub HB 54
Mark Testimony as written proponent Testimony
Transportation Committee
Thursday, February 27, 2025
Testimony of Grant Aungst

Chair Patton, Vice Chair Schaffer, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Transportation Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony to express my support for the passage of Sub HB 54. My name is Grant Aungst and I am the Community and Economic Development Director for the City of Brunswick. We are grateful and most appreciative of the time and efforts Senator Mark Romanchuk, Representative Melanie Miller and Representative Sharon Ray, has dedicated to the citizens of Brunswick.

I am proponent of Sub HB 54 because it will repeal the interchange mandate. This is the exact repeal language the Ohio Senate passed 30-1 in the last General Assembly. Supporting Sub HB 54 will support the many long-term community stakeholders and senior homeowners in the Boston Road area, who have and continue to worry over the past year plus, over holidays, birthdays and anniversaries, about, will I have my home to come back to, or will it be taken for a poorly planned and executed highway interchange? How do you explain to the property owner, that the value of your largest investment, is not what the fair market will offer, nor will the State compensate you based on the value prior to the interchange announcement? Our community members are the heart and soul of the community, they deserve to be heard, and we heard them along with Senator Romanchuk, Representative Miller and Representative Ray, have you?

HB 23 was wrong to impose upon another community, by forcing them to face the problems of a community, brought upon them by their own planning. The report generated by Strongsville, showed that the impact in attempting to move the traffic from State Route 82 south, was minor at best. Based on this alone, one can surmise this is not the solution and may in fact create additional challenges not yet imagined with a one-sided study, driven by a one-sided objective.

The primary wealth of an individual or family is based on home ownership. As we know, normally the largest purchase in someone's life is their home. They invest in their home for the long term, for their safety, health and overall family welfare. In today's day and age, we are trying to build more homes. There is a housing shortage of millions of housing units. To put this interchange in, it will amplify the housing problem. These homeowners will need to replace their homes, many of them paid for, how do they do that,

with interest rates higher than the past 20 years? Our community members put down roots as part of their home, they created wealth that they can save for, borrow from, they maintain the yard, plant flowers and trees, they put down roots. Perhaps they plant a tree every time they have a child or grandchild, and now that tree and its roots are in danger of not being part of the family or community. The home is also a gathering place to share stories and celebrate, a place to laugh and cry together, a place to call home. And it's a place to pass down from one family to another. This is what creates wealth, the owning of a home for a family.

Brunswick is primarily a residential community. With community neighborhoods, long term friendships and family ownership of homes. This proposed interchange, forever damages that prospect of forever homes, family, friendships and community. I respectfully ask that you support Sub HB 54 and the repeal of ORC 5501.6.