

Senate Transportation Committee
Senator Hearcel F. Craig and Senator Kent Smith
March 26, 2025
Senate Bill 85

Good morning Chairman Patton, Vice Chair Schaffer, Ranking Member Leader Antonio and members of the Transportation Committee. Thank you for allowing Senator Smith and myself to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 85, creating the Ohio NAACP license plate.

Created over one hundred years ago, in 1909, a group of individuals came together to establish the NAACP. Of those people, you may recognize the names of W.E.B. Du Bois, Mary White Ovington, and Ida B. Wells. It is important to note that the NAACP was then, as it is now, a racially diverse organization. In fact, its first National President, Moorfield Storey, was a white attorney from Boston. The NAACP's diverse coalition went on to win important victories for people of color, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights act of 1965. There are 2,200 chapters across this country, and forty-eight of them are in this great state.

The first NAACP chapter in Ohio was Cleveland, established in 1914. In the following year, chapters were formed in Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, and Toledo. These early organizations were tasked with building bridges across racial and socio-economic divides, a mission that continues to this day. From desegregating schools to advancing civil and human rights across the state, Ohio's NAACP chapters have been responsible for significant progress.

Since its founding in 1931, the Ohio Conference for the NAACP has had a clear and distinctive focus in addressing political, educational, social, and economic equality for all Ohioans. I'd especially like to recognize Tom Roberts, President of the Ohio Conference, for his continued work and dedication to the NAACP's mission to remove all barriers of racial discrimination through the democratic process - the very same process that is taking place at this moment.

The Ohio Conference for the NAACP answers with honor and distinction the clarion call for freedom, justice, and equality for all residents of Ohio, and indeed, all Americans. This legislation enables Ohioans to support the NAACP's essential mission by not only ensuring that proceeds from the license plates go to the Ohio NAACP, but also by raising awareness of the good work of this organization as these license plates travel roads and highways in Ohio and beyond.

Chairman Patton and members of the committee, I appreciate your attention and consideration of this license plate. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.