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State Senator

14<sup>th</sup> District



**Sponsor Testimony**

Senate Bill 180

Senate Transportation Committee

June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Chairman Patton, Vice Chair Schaffer, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Transportation Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 180.

Under this legislation, public entities – including the state, agencies, and law enforcement – would be prohibited from purchasing small, unmanned aircraft systems manufactured by a covered foreign entity, such as manufacturers based in the People’s Republic of China, or the Russian Federation.

With increasing reports of drones from unknown sources operating in sensitive areas, this legislation strengthens security by encouraging the use of American-made drones. By prioritizing domestically manufactured systems, Ohio can reduce the risks of data vulnerabilities, unauthorized surveillance, and potential foreign interference in sensitive infrastructure and public safety operations. Ensuring that government-operated drones are sourced from U.S. manufacturers enhances overall security and public confidence.

A key feature of this proposal is that it does not impose an immediate replacement requirement. Instead, it provides a transition period until May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2027, ensuring that law enforcement agencies and other public entities can continue operating their existing drone programs while planning for future compliance. This structure allows for a phased approach that avoids unnecessary financial burdens.

This legislation is modeled after similar efforts taking place at the federal level, where agencies such as the Department of Defense, have restricted the use of foreign-manufactured drones due to security concerns. Several other states have already enacted similar legislation, including Florida, Indiana, Nebraska, Nevada, and Mississippi. Additionally, a handful of other states across the country recognize the importance of securing their drone programs and are expected to take action on this issue in the coming year.

By enacting this legislation, Ohio would take an important step toward bettering the security and integrity of government-operated drone programs.

Thank you again for your time and attention. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.