



**Deborah Collins, Association Manager
Ohio Real Estate Investors Association
Senate Workforce Development Committee
Senate Bill 143 Opponent Testimony
February 10, 2026**

Chair Koehler, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Ingram, and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee, I am Deborah Collins, Association Manager of the Ohio Real Estate Investors Association (OREIA), a board member of the Real Estate Investors Association of Greater Cincinnati and an active real estate investor since 2004. OREIA represents 14 local associations with over 3,000 members. On behalf of our members who own, operate, and manage businesses across Ohio, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on Senate Bill 143.

As policymakers discuss ways to reduce barriers to employment for individuals with criminal histories, it is critical to recognize an important reality: not all jobs occur behind a counter or in a controlled public space. Many jobs require employees to enter private homes, often when residents are not present, or when they are alone and vulnerable.

Members of our organization represent independent housing providers across Ohio. In the normal course of operating and maintaining housing, our members directly or indirectly hire individuals who must enter residents' homes. These include property managers, maintenance technicians, handymen, HVAC professionals, plumbers, acquisition staff, inspectors, and others who are granted access to what is often the most personal and sacred space a resident has.

For residents, especially single mothers with children, elderly Ohioans aging in place, and individuals with disabilities, this access is not theoretical. It is deeply personal and tied directly to their sense of safety.

When a housing provider sends someone into a home, the resident assumes that reasonable steps were taken to ensure that person is trustworthy. That trust is foundational. It is also fragile. Removing an employer's ability to ask early, transparent questions about criminal background undermines that trust and shifts unnecessary risk onto residents who did not consent to that risk.

SB143 would prohibit employers from even asking a basic screening question at the application stage, regardless of whether the position requires unsupervised access to private residences. This does not eliminate background checks, it merely delays them. The result is wasted time for employers, false expectations for applicants, and increased safety exposure for residents.

Housing providers are not attempting to punish or exclude re-entry citizens. Many already participate in second-chance hiring. But there is a meaningful difference between providing opportunity and removing discretion for positions where safety is paramount.



Ohio already recognized this balance in 2012 when it enacted the Certificate of Qualification for Employment (CQE) program. The CQE exists precisely to help individuals with criminal histories demonstrate rehabilitation and fitness for employment, while preserving employer judgment in sensitive roles. SB143 disregards that carefully constructed framework.

Employers who require clean backgrounds for in-home positions should be allowed to identify that requirement upfront. Doing so respects applicants' time, protects residents, and preserves the trust that makes housing stability possible.

We urge the committee to consider the unintended consequences of SB143, not just for employers, but for the families, seniors, and vulnerable Ohioans whose safety depends on thoughtful screening practices. For these reasons, we respectfully oppose Senate Bill 143.

Thank you for your consideration.