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18th House District**

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**House Bill 262: Extension of the Jurisdiction of the Ohio Civil Rights Commission
Sponsor Testimony before the House Local Government Committee**

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Ryan, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the House Local Government Committee: thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 262.

This bill extends the operational jurisdiction of the Ohio Civil Rights Commission's investigative and enforcement capabilities to support municipalities with anti-discrimination ordinances.

Under current law, the Ohio Civil Rights Commission may enforce state anti-discrimination laws by investigating claims of discrimination made by Ohioans. This bill would allow municipalities with their own local anti-discrimination rules to request support from the OCRC to investigate and enforce those ordinances.

The bill would offer municipalities that lack the resources of our major metropolitan areas to provide the enforcement mechanisms their residents expect when an anti-discrimination ordinance is passed. The OCRC could accept the request and investigate any claims provided that its resources allow for such assistance.

This legislation was first brought to my attention by constituents in the communities of Grandview Heights and Bexley, Ohio. Unlike the City of Columbus, these smaller suburbs do not have the resources available to institute their own civil rights commissions. When claims of discrimination are made by residents in accordance with their individual anti-discrimination laws, these cities cannot always investigate those claims.

Providing them with greater access to the Ohio Civil Rights Commission would promote the integrity of the law in municipalities across the state, and has been supported by elected officials in both cities.

This bill would provide greater protection from housing and workplace discrimination to those Ohioans most vulnerable. By extending the operational jurisdiction of the OCRC from the state-level to the state- and municipal-level, we are ensuring that Ohioans have greater resources to employ when residents feel discriminated against.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 262. We would be happy to answer any questions at this time.