



## **SB 201: Nuisance – Vacant Property**

### **Interested Party Testimony**

**Lindsey M. Gardiner, Greater Ohio Policy Center**

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Chairman Bacon, Vice Chair Oelslager, Ranking Member Skindell, and members of the Senate Civil Justice Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to offer interested party testimony on Senate Bill 201, which proposes to expand Ohio’s nuisance law to apply to any real property, including vacant land, on which an offense of violence has occurred or is occurring.

My name is Lindsey Gardiner and I am the Manager of Government Affairs of the Greater Ohio Policy Center. Greater Ohio is a nonpartisan nonprofit that is valued for its data-driven research. Our mission is to champion revitalization in Ohio and support efforts to build strong sustainable communities.

SB 201, which would add “an offense of violence” to the section of state law, would give city prosecutors an additional tool to deal with nuisance problems communities face throughout Ohio. GOPC believe this legislation will diametrically benefit Ohio’s communities in cultivating safer neighborhoods and protecting future and existing property investments.

Currently, local governments are not able to use violence as a justification for shuttering a problematic property. As you may already be aware from Senator Hughes’ testimony on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the law requires sending an undercover officer to bust places for prostitution, drug sales or illegal alcohol sales for a property to qualify as a nuisance. Expanding the nuisance definition within the Ohio Revised Code will help protect our officers and allow them to use their limited time and resources more effectively.

From an economic development standpoint, GOPC believes this bill will also help address blight within our urban and rural neighborhoods by strengthening an existing tool local government officials already use to deal with problem properties that are hazardous. The causes of blight are complex, but the impact of nuisance properties is clear. Any tool that improves the ability of public officials to contain a nuisance is another way for officials to stabilize and improve the value of surrounding properties and the conditions of the local neighborhood.

The property nuisance statute is an important one for Ohio's communities. GOPC is currently working on a proposal to further strengthen this statute to be even more effective in dealing with blighted and nuisance properties and we look forward to sharing those recommendations with the Legislature.

We were pleased to see Senator Jim Hughes and Senator Kenny Yuko come together to combat this issue and believe this legislative improvement to the nuisance statute is another step in the right direction that will help communities improve and move forward; therefore, I respectfully request the members of the Senate Civil Justice Committee to favorably report SB 201.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'd be pleased to answer any questions.

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