

Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Scott Oelslager, Chairman  
FY 2018-19 Budget Testimony – HB 49  
Testimony from Reita Smith, James Preston Poindexter Foundation  
*June 1, 2017*

Chairman Oelslager and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Reita Smith and I am the chairwoman of the James Preston Poindexter Foundation board of trustees. I am honored and grateful for this opportunity to speak to you and your colleagues today on behalf of the James Preston Poindexter Foundation and the Ohio History Connection and many of our Ohio citizens.

We are so blessed by our recent collaboration with the Ohio History Connection in the saving of the two remaining historic Poindexter Village buildings here in Columbus and becoming their 59th site, the only African American site in central Ohio. Our vision is supported by local and national historic groups. Director Lonnie Bunch III, of the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D. C. shared with us, "As a museum dedicated to documenting, studying, and exhibiting African American life, art, history and culture we recognize the importance of those sacred public places which served as respite places for African Americans during the period of segregation. As you have pointed out, the recently opened NMAAHC has a gallery exclusively designed to highlight the power of 'place.' Place is not just a physical or geographic location, but it is where culture is made and histories and identities are created and recreated. We urge you to continue to advocate for the preservation of these important historic properties."

Collectively, we envision we will have the opportunity to share the history and stories of our African American ancestors who have enriched Ohio's history but particularly those in Central Ohio whose contributions have not been known. Therefore, investing in Ohio history is the right thing to do and the State of Ohio's budget can reflect that support, ensuring Ohio citizens have the opportunity to learn about Ohio's rich heritage and its contributions to the rich heritage of this country. The boost in state funding for Ohio History to about \$12M would be a positive step to ensure we come closer to meeting that goal.

Thank you for your time and consideration today. I would be happy to answer any questions.