



Proponent Testimony
House Bill 498
House Aging and Long Term-Care Committee

Chairman Ginter, Vice-Chair Swearingen, and Ranking Member Howse, the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council provides this written testimony in support of House Bill 498.

The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council is created by the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000. That federal law states, in part, “the goals of the Nation properly include a goal of providing individuals with developmental disabilities with information, skills, opportunities and support to-...(B) live in homes and communities in which such individuals can exercise their full rights and responsibilities as citizens.”

However, in Ohio, like many other states, residential construction does not include any requirements to include accessible features. The Residential Code of Ohio’s only statement on accessibility is that if a builder plans to include an accessible feature, those features must comply with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard for accessibility.

Past attempts to improve state government support of either requiring or incentivizing accessible features in one-, two-, and three-family homes have not been supported by the building industry. So in 2015, the Council, through a grant, released the results of a study that evaluated the value of accessible housing features in Ohio.

Our study of current and potential homebuyers, homebuilders and developers, and real estate agents revealed some interesting perceptions of Ohioans related to accessible housing:

- Homeowners and home buyers, “would prefer to buy houses with one or more visitable features, expected visitable houses to sell faster and believed the visitable features would enhance the qualities of the house.”
- “Although most of the homeowners and homebuyers expected houses with a visitable feature to sell for more than houses without it, and although most of them believed that such a house was home to an older person or a wheelchair user, respondents: Preferred to buy the house with a visitable feature; and thought houses with visitable features would sell faster than houses lacking such features.”
- Real estate agents and appraisers estimated that including visitable features in a home’s construction could potentially increase the value of home by nearly \$15,000.

- Builders and developers that participated in the study estimated including visitable features during the construction of a new home would cost less than one percent of the total construction cost, but the cost to retrofit existing houses was more expensive, costing an additional \$3,180.

The Council believes this study shows significant evidence that Ohio should be doing more to improve the availability of houses with accessible features. House Bill 498 is a step in the right direction because it provides incentives for current homeowners to begin modifications that would extend the use of a single-family dwelling should an inhabit become temporarily or permanently disabled. Beyond the use of the homeowner and their immediate family, increasing accessible housing improves the chances that people with disabilities can experience full community integration through visiting friends, family and neighbors that have taken the steps to make their homes welcoming to others with mobility impairments.

A full copy of the study on visitable housing is available on our website at <https://ddc.ohio.gov/Portals/0/visitability-report-6-15.pdf>.

The Council would like to thank Rep. Mark Frazier for introducing House Bill 498.

Respectfully Submitted,
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Executive Director