



Representative Stephanie Howse  
11<sup>th</sup> House District

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Sponsor Testimony

House Bill 325

State and Local Government Committee

November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Good Morning,

Chair Wiggam, Vice-Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the State and Local Government Committee, thank you for allowing Rep. Miller and I the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 325 (H.B. 325). House Bill 325 would designate February 18th as Toni Morrison Day.

Toni Morrison is a beloved African American novelist, essayist, and former professor. Morrison's works are sophisticated, thought-provoking, and challenges readers of all ages to examine their understanding of the world around them. Morrison's works have been and continue to be required curriculum readings for youth and college students across the U.S. to help develop them as more well-rounded global citizens.

She was the first black female editor at Random House, won the Nobel Prize in Literature, the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. More important than awards, is her continued impact on the African-American community and the global community at large. Her work stirred our souls, challenged our conscience to confront injustices, and encouraged the rest of the world to do the same. She set the stage for an entire generation of authors to tell their untold stories and celebrate the beautiful diversity of humankind.

Morrison's legacy is cemented in my home district of Cleveland through the fantastic work of the Toni Morrison Society titled, "Bench by the Road Project." Our bench is located near the Cozad Bates House in the University Circle neighborhood near Euclid Avenue and was dedicated to her in 2016.

HB 325 is critical legislation to ensure the legacy of Toni Morrison be remembered and held within high esteem. The designation of February 18th, her birthday, as Toni Morrison Day would reflect to our fellow Ohioans and the world just how impactful she was and continues to be.

Thank you, Chairman Wiggam, and State and Local Government Committee for your attention to this designation.

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Committees:

Aging and Long Term Care, Ranking Member  
Finance  
Finance Subcommittee on Transportation  
Transportation and Public Safety

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