



House Ways and Means Committee
Testimony on SB 212
Erich Bittner, Director of Government Relations
Ohio Association of County Boards of DD
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Chairman Merrin, Vice-Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Rogers, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee; thank you for the opportunity to speak about Senate Bill 212 on behalf of the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities.

County boards of DD fund and coordinate a lifetime of essential services and supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families. Boards are therefore uniquely positioned to understand the complex housing needs of Ohioans with disabilities. Experience has taught us that the availability of adequate housing is a significant barrier to the ability of people with developmental disabilities to live happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives integrated into the community of their choosing.

As written, Senate Bill 212 promises to create new and improved housing stock through the use of property tax exemptions for the construction of new homes in certain circumstances. We agree that Ohio has many housing challenges, and we applaud Senator Schuring for seeking creative solutions to this problem. However, we urge you to use this bill as an opportunity to address accessibility disparities in housing. Very little housing is designed to be accessible to people with disabilities, and as a result people with physical disabilities often have trouble finding appropriate housing and may face prohibitive costs to modify an existing structure to fit their needs.

For this reason, **we ask the committee to amend the bill to require a meaningful portion of any new construction developed under the statute to fall within the guidelines and requirements set forth for adaptive design by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.** Housing issues uniquely affect thousands of people with developmental disabilities across Ohio due to the lack of affordable and accessible housing solutions. By implementing such a requirement in Senate Bill 212, the General Assembly can help to address a critical issue for people with all types of disabilities by ensuring that all Ohioans—regardless of their ability level—can reap the benefits of new housing stock created under these tax exemptions.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. I am happy to answer any questions at this time.