



**House Civil Justice Committee  
Proponent Testimony for HB 182  
Enterprise Community Partners  
April 27, 2021**

Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chair Grendell, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support in House Bill 182.

Enterprise Community Partners is a national housing and community development nonprofit. We are the only national nonprofit that addresses America's affordable housing crisis from every angle, combining 40 years of experience, thousands of partners, and the expertise of over 1,100 employees nationwide.

Here in Ohio, Enterprise has a statewide office based in Cleveland that facilitates a number of coalitions, housing investments, and programs to increase our housing supply, advance racial equity, and build resilience and upward mobility. For example, Enterprise convenes the [Housing First Initiative](#), the [Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition](#), and the [Cuyahoga Earned Income Tax Credit Coalition](#). In 2020 alone, we invested over \$33 million in new affordable housing and facilitated emergency Covid support to residents and community partners.

For the past 5+ years, we are proud conveners of the Fair Housing Working Group in Cuyahoga County. The Fair Housing Working Group is coalition of organizations and residents advocating for greater housing choice. Our Coalition includes: The Fair Housing Center, Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, Cleveland State University, EDEN, Inc., Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless, Famicos Foundation, CHN Housing Partners, City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, and more.

**Enterprise and the Fair Housing Working Group support House Bill 182 to end source of income discrimination in our State.**

Source of Income (SOI) discrimination occurs when a landlord refuses to rent a unit to a potential tenant based on that person's source of income, such as Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8), veterans' vouchers, disability benefits, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security, or even emergency rental assistance. Unfortunately, this form of housing discrimination is legal in most parts of our State and it happens often. For example, according to [The Fair Housing Center](#), landlords with units in Cuyahoga County outside areas with heavy concentrations of existing housing vouchers deny housing voucher families more than 90% of the time.

**SOI discrimination disproportionately hurts children, veterans, and people living with disabilities.**

We know that one's zip code dramatically impacts their health and opportunity in life. According to [groundbreaking research](#) published in 2015, "Individuals who live in high-poverty areas fare worse than those who live in lower-poverty neighborhoods on a wide range of economic, health, and educational outcomes." Yet, SOI discrimination can close doors to families looking to move up and out of poverty.

This form of housing discrimination has an especially consequential impact on children. Children under the age of 18, for example, account for [approximately one-third of all people assisted by the Housing Choice Voucher Program](#), meaning that allowing discrimination against families with vouchers undermines access to safe, decent housing and greater opportunity for our youngest residents.

Further, in Cuyahoga County alone, the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority administers federal housing vouchers to [586 veterans](#) as part of an effort to counteract veteran homelessness. And [nearly 40% of all Housing Choice Voucher Program households](#) are headed by people with disabilities.

**SOI discrimination is a proxy for race discrimination.**

89% of the more than 16,000 households using a voucher in Cuyahoga County are Black. Voucher participants make up nearly 1 in 7 of all Black households in Cuyahoga County. A study by The Fair Housing Center showed that landlords in Cuyahoga County who put “No Section 8” in rental ads are, in fact, more [likely to discriminate based on race](#). This means denying a voucher family a home is used as a proxy to deny that family a home based on their race. It is unconscionable to allow this type of discrimination to continue.

**SOI discrimination wastes precious investments in housing.**

Safe, decent housing is already hard to come by. Waiting listings for housing vouchers are routinely thousands and thousands of names long. Families can sometimes wait years for privilege of receiving a housing voucher, only to be unable to find decent housing once they receive it. The same is true for families in more dire situations, like those living in our county homeless shelters. SOI discrimination is an additional obstacle to overcome homelessness that can force families into longer shelter tenures, which results in a greater expense to our community.

Housing insecurity only continues to raise across the nation and here in Ohio. To address the pandemic, the State has made strategic investments in emergency rental assistance to stabilize our neighborhoods and economy. Yet after making these unprecedented investments, families who receive assistance can still be turned away by a landlord because of that assistance.

**Many communities and states have already implemented SOI protections.**

SOI protection is not just the right thing to do; it is an effective policy for mitigating discrimination. [A comprehensive 2018 study by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#) showed that in communities with SOI protections landlords were less likely to deny housing vouchers than in cities without SOI protection.

Governments are stepping up to protect their residents. [SOI protections are already in place in 17 states](#). It is time for Ohio to join them.

Access to safe, decent housing is a growing challenge in our State. Protecting a family’s right to access affordable housing is a down payment toward tackling housing insecurity and securing opportunity for all. It is time to protect our families, veterans, residents leaving with disabilities, and more by opening the doors of opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 182. Enterprise Community Partners and the Fair Housing Working Group are available to answer any questions at [elundgard@enterprisecommunity.org](mailto:elundgard@enterprisecommunity.org).