



## **Testimony in Support of Ohio H.B. 182**

Delivered in Writing Only to the Civil Justice Committee

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Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Grendell, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the committee, the Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio (the "Alliance") wishes to submit the following written-only testimony in support of House Bill 182, prohibiting discrimination based on source of income.

We thank Representatives Miller and Upchurch for leading this important and timely conversation on housing equity and access. The Alliance's membership is composed of nonprofit and for-profit specialists from across the housing spectrum, including landlords that own thousands of properties across the state, homeless system experts, housing counselors, and community lending institutions. This diversity of perspective means we must balance a wide variety of considerations, and often competing interests, when determining whether a policy proposal is in the best interest of the Ohio community we collectively serve. Our members' wisdom and experiences compel us to acknowledge that source of income bias is real, and it is a major barrier in our communities.

In Franklin County alone, 54,000 households pay more than half of their income towards housing costs. Many are seniors, individuals with disabilities, or working parents who rely on non-wage income to help pay their rent. Unfortunately, those residents are often excluded from the neighborhoods in which they work or worship because landlords refuse to accept nontraditional income sources like veterans' benefits, child support, and housing vouchers. This discrimination makes it harder for new residents to find stability, and for existing residents to remain in their homes as their income sources change with age or tribulation. It also makes it harder to find the type of housing that is the best fit for a family's unique needs - whether it is a physical accessibility need, like a no-step entryway, or a community service need, like proximity to health care facilities. As with other recognized forms of discrimination, the end-result is deeply entrenched racial and gender inequality and economic segregation. Which, in turn, impairs our state's vibrancy by disconnecting workers, employers, and the communities they operate within.

House Bill 182 is key to combatting this problem by ensuring that our people are protected and our region's future remains fair for all. Source of income laws ensure that tenants who can afford rent are not excluded simply because of *how* they pay that rent. Half the American population is already protected by a state or local source of income provision and the research shows they are both effective and efficient for tenants and landlords alike.

Once again, the Alliance thanks you for facilitating a dialogue around this important question. We are happy to convey the research we have compiled, the stories our members shared, and other considerations that led us to support this anti-discrimination measure. We appreciate your earnest exploration of solutions to our deepening housing crisis and look forward to collaborations that can advance our housing needs.

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