



**Representative DJ Swearingen**

Ohio House District 89

**HB 235 Sponsor Testimony**

Chairman Stein, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan, and members of the Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for hearing sponsor testimony on HB 235. This bill looks to establish minimum safety standards for construction work at oil refineries, by providing minimum qualifications for workers performing the construction work at these facilities. The goal ultimate goal is to continue ensuring that anyone working at these facilities can continue to go home to their families at night and that the surrounding communities remain safe and protected. There are a few points that I want to address.

Firstly, this is not a union vs. non-union bill. This bill sets standards for both union and non-union workers to qualify to work on these facilities for construction/maintenance work. The standards are intended to be equivalent of each other, just using different metrics. This bill does not dictate what kind of workers are hired by these facilities' operators/owners, only that the workers meet the training and qualification requirements.

Secondly, you are going to hear the argument that this legislation is not needed. As Ohio sees a workforce influx from the Gulf Coast and Texas, we believe that it is prudent to set minimum standards for the workforce performing the construction work on these facilities so that there is an assurance that the entire construction workforce is qualified to do the job.

This bill, at the end of the day, is about keeping Ohio's workers and our communities safe. These facilities employ thousands of workers and we want them to succeed and thrive, but we need to make sure that the people who are working on these facilities have the background and knowledge to minimize risks. Thank you for your time today, Rep. Baldrige and I look forward to answering any questions the committee may have.