



Ohio Mayors Alliance Proponent Testimony

HOUSE BILL 2

Ohio Senate Financial Institutions and Technology Committee

March 9, 2021

Chairman Wilson, Vice-Chairman Hottinger, Ranking Member Maharath and members of the Senate Financial Institutions and Technology Committee, on behalf of the Ohio Mayors Alliance, I would like to submit this testimony in support of Ohio House Bill 2. The Ohio Mayors Alliance is a bipartisan coalition of mayors in Ohio's largest urban and suburban communities. Our mission is to strengthen Ohio's cities and metropolitan regions through collaboration, communication, improved advocacy, and stronger partnerships with policymakers.

House Bill 2 facilitates broadband expansion throughout the state and our local communities and creates the necessary mechanisms and incentives to provide access to reliable high-speed internet to Ohioans. An estimated 700,000 Ohioans remain without access to reliable high-speed internet, and this bill will begin the process of connecting those Ohioans to the twenty-first century.

In the midst of a global pandemic, many of members of our communities are confined to working from home, learning from home, and accessing telehealth services from home. An inability to access reliable high-speed internet means that there are many Ohioans unable to participate in our state's economy, schools, and healthcare system. House Bill 2 takes important steps in connecting all Ohioans to jobs, education, and healthcare.

Connectivity and accessibility to reliable high-speed internet is a challenge faced throughout the state, both in our rural and urban communities. The Mayors' Partnership for Progress is a member of the Ohio Mayors Alliance, representing a coalition of southeastern Ohio mayors. Connectivity and accessibility to reliable high-speed internet throughout southeastern Ohio is something that everyone agrees is a major problem for the region, and our state as a whole. It comes to a surprise to many that connectivity and accessibility to reliable high-speed internet in urban areas is also a problem. Often times these connectivity and access issues occur in underserved areas in our communities. House Bill 2 will create additional incentives to expand broadband connectivity into these communities.

Thank you to Representatives Carfagna and Stewart their work on House Bill 2, and to Senator McColley and the members of the Ohio Senate who passed Senate Bill 8 earlier this year. We are happy to help address any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keary McCarthy", written over a white background.

Keary McCarthy

Executive Director, Ohio Mayors Alliance

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