

Good morning Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing and the opportunity to provide this written testimony.

My name is Jack Amrhein and I serve the Kent community as a ward councilman and am the council's appointment to the Kent Health Board. I urge you to delete the provision in House bill 110 to dissolve boards of health in cities whose population is below 50,000 residents.

- The city of Kent has a population of nearly 30,000 residents and when Kent State University is in session there are 28,000 undergraduate and graduate students many who live in the city. The City of Kent Health Department inspects student housing as well as food establishments on campus. The suggested merger of our health department with the county health department would tax an already overtaxed system.
- It should not be the function of the legislative government to decide if local board of health should exist. Instead, it should be left the citizens (taxpayers) who finance and support these institutions.
- It seems ironic to me that Ohio would require that all health departments go through an expensive and time-consuming accreditation process and as the City of Kent Health Department is only months away from completing this process it be forced to consolidate with the county health board.
- The City Kent Health Department offers many programs that help to keep our community safe and healthy. Some of these programs include educating food service workers and owners in sanitary and safe food preparation. Smoking cessation courses as well as spraying for mosquitos. Will there be a guarantee that these programs that our community supports will continue to exist if we merge with the county health department?
- I find it interesting that this bill is being introduced during a time in which local boards of health have been spending a majority their time dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Is this how their hard work is to be recognized? It seems to me that this is big government trying to swallow up local control.

- The city of Kent has an outstanding Health Department with an impressive Board. The members of the board include a professor of epidemiology a medical sociologist, two registered nurses and a pharmacist. Our Health Director is a registered nurse and was formally an Infection Preventionist for Portage University Hospitals. The Director has done an outstanding job and was recognized by Crain's magazine for her outstanding work during the pandemic. This outstanding Health Department should not be swallowed up by the county.

I would again ask that the provision in House Bill 110 to dissolve local Boards of Health in cities with a population of less than 50,000 residents be removed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.