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To: Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee

Date: Tuesday, 10/19/2021

Subject: Proponent Testimony in Support of SB 158

Chairperson Manning, Vice Chairperson McColley, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Zillow in support of SB 158, which establishes processes for courts to consider expunging eviction records that are not relevant predictors of future tenancies. We applaud the Ohio Legislature for considering this important issue and appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Zillow is a leader in the rental and real estate marketplace and a trusted source for data, inspiration, and knowledge among both renters and landlords. We firmly believe in reducing barriers to housing and are committed to supporting legislation like SB 158 that seeks to expand housing access.

Research indicates that having an eviction record increases the likelihood of chronic housing instability and job loss, often “blacklisting” tenants from finding future housing even after their financial situation has stabilized.<sup>1</sup> Renter housing instability has been exacerbated by the pandemic and Zillow’s research indicates that about three million households remain at risk of eviction nationwide.<sup>2</sup>

This crisis is amplified among people of color, who are disproportionately more likely to be renters and have fallen behind on rent payments during the pandemic. In partnership with the National Fair Housing Alliance, Zillow surveyed 10,000 adults in 20 major metro areas nationwide and found that Black and Latinx households were more likely to report job and/or income loss due to the pandemic and were subsequently more likely to report difficulty keeping up with rent payments.<sup>3</sup>

SB 158 provides increased opportunities for renters to file eviction expungement motions while maintaining a landlord’s ability to supply evidence in opposition. In doing so, we believe that SB 158 empowers Ohio courts to balance landlord access to eviction records with renters’ access to housing. Appropriately addressing these interests will be critical in mitigating pandemic-induced chronic housing instability in the years ahead as the nation faces a possible increase in evictions over the coming months.

In closing, we greatly appreciate your leadership in considering this issue and would respectfully request that the members of the Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee support SB 158. We would like to extend our appreciation to Senators Craig and Kunze for bringing forward this important bipartisan legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> Pew Charitable Trusts, <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2021/08/26/state-policymakers-are-working-to-change-how-courts-handle-eviction-cases>

<sup>2</sup> Zillow Research, <https://www.zillow.com/research/supreme-court-evictions-sept-2021-30023/>

<sup>3</sup> Zillow Research, <https://www.zillow.com/research/nfha-pandemic-impacts-2021-29905/>