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Senate Bill 158
Proponent Testimony
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Chairman Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary committee. Thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on Senate Bill 158. This legislation would amend section 1923.01 and enact section 1923.111 of the Revised Code related to expungement of eviction case court files.

LMM is a 52-year-old non-profit providing innovative social enterprise job-training, civic engagement strategies and safety net services in the city of Cleveland and across Northeast Ohio. LMM provides an array of direct service programming, behavioral health services and housing. LMM's Guardianship Services, active in Cuyahoga and Lorain Counties, provides legal guardians to serve as advocates and surrogate decision-makers for indigent adults who cannot care for themselves (and have often encountered abuse or exploitation). LMM manages the Chopping for Change (C4C) program that provides culinary training to women who are currently incarcerated. These program participants, in partnership with full-time staff, operate a kitchen that provides meals to area homeless shelters. Finally, LMM operates three emergency shelters: the Men's Shelter at 2100 Lakeside (Ohio's largest emergency shelter, serving on average 400 men per night); the Haven Home (Cuyahoga County's family overflow shelter that serves up to 40 women and children per night); and Next Step (Cuyahoga County's only shelter for youth under 18).

As the state's largest provider of emergency shelter, LMM was responsible for quickly pivoting to meet the needs of residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. From March 2020 through August 2021, LMM operated both The Men's Shelter at 2100 Lakeside and in partnership with the Cuyahoga County Office of Homeless Services, managed the hotel hub model to help deconcentrate shelter. LMM served 940 residents at the hotel hub, accounting for over 100,000 total bed nights, and provided over 400,000 meals from LMM's Central Kitchen. During this time, the COVID positive rate averaged 4.3% evidence of the effectiveness of these strategies; in comparison, Cuyahoga County averaged a 14-day positivity rate of 7% over the same period. To further support these efforts LMM also instituted a series of innovative and low-cost interventions to reduce demand for shelter including direct cash incentive programs and master leasing units. We believe these interventions, coupled with federal eviction moratorium and both state and federal financial aid, helped keep people in their homes and limited demand for shelter.

Now that the hotel hub effort has ended, we are already seeing an increase in the demand for congregate shelter. As other pandemic interventions continue to expire we remain concerned about a resulting surge in evictions, and what this could mean long-term in both demand for shelter and the barriers to permanent housing. Currently, 11% of all Ohioans - totaling 800,000 individuals - are at risk of eviction due to financial hardship from the pandemic.

It is important that the Senate Judiciary Committee advance SB 158 which would allow for the expungement of an eviction after 3-years of a clean housing record. This would help limit the long-term impact that the current

economic challenges would otherwise have on residents. This is especially important as according to the Cleveland Eviction Study, evictions most commonly impact low-income, minority, female head of households with children. It is not uncommon for residents of the Haven Home to be limited in their housing options because of their eviction records. Past evictions are also a common barrier to the Men's Shelter at 2100 finding housing, and can extend their stay in shelter. At a time when the ability to live in a non-congregate shelter is critical to avoiding the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, SB 158 would reduce barriers to leaving emergency shelter for the people we serve.

SB 158 would help provide second chances to thousands of Ohioans who have faced eviction, and in doing so reduce barriers to housing and lessen the demand for emergency shelter. This is an urgent matter that we are grateful that this committee is addressing.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions.