



## Ohio Realist Association

6031 E. Main St, #719,  
Columbus, OH 43213

February 8, 2021

Chairman Louis Blessing III  
Ohio Senate Building  
1 Capitol Square Ground Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

### **RE: S.B. No. 24 First-time Home Buyer Savings Act**

Dear Chairman Blessing,

My name is Veronica Bedell-Nevels, President of the Ohio Realist Association. As part of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB), the Ohio Realist Association (ORA) is in its 69th year serving Ohioans through seven local chapters in Cincinnati, Dayton, Toledo, Columbus, Cleveland, Akron, and Youngstown-Warren. NAREB is the oldest African American trade association in the United States of America, celebrating 73 years of real estate services to underserved communities in this country. Our motto is, "*promoting Democracy in housing!*"

Our organization is a proponent of S.B. No. 24, the "*First-time Home Buyer Savings Act*". We see the inherent value of this bill for Ohioans creating an opportunity for first-time homebuyers to save for the American dream of homeownership. This bill creates the roadmap needed by so many to make this dream a reality. We appreciate that the First-time Home Buyer Savings Account is simple and easy to explain to every Ohioan. These funds that are saved in a specified bank account are deducted from the person's adjusted gross income on their tax return and are used to pay or reimburse a qualified beneficiary's eligible costs for the purchase of a single-family residence, including a mobile home, in the State of Ohio. We support this excellent opportunity that would be provided to our citizens.

NAREB and the Ohio Realist Association have spent decades finding ways to help people afford and purchase homes while fighting for the equitable rights of homeownership. We work with down payment assistance programs, provide first time homebuyer educational workshops and HUD-assisted credit programming, and we have banking partners who work with our clients to help them become mortgage-ready. With all of this, it is still difficult to increase the homeownership rate in certain communities.

We are asking that you vote for S.B. No. 24 to give the first-time home buyer that much needed assist in a mortgage environment that is ever-changing and more challenging year by year.

Sincerely,

*Veronica Bedell-Nevels,*

President,  
Ohio Realist Association