



Office of State Representative Stephanie Howse House District II

STATE REPRESENTATIVE STEPHANIE HOWSE SPONSOR TESTIMONY - HOUSE BILL 83

Chairman Green, Vice Chair Greenspan, Ranking Member Sheehy and members of the Transportation and Public Safety Committee. I want to thank you for listening to our sponsor testimonies on House Bill 83 and why the Opportunity Corridor should be named the Carl and Louis Stokes Opportunity Corridor. My joint sponsor Rep. Kent Smith has provided a historical overview of the achievements of the late Honorable Congressman Louis Stokes and the Honorable Mayor Carl Stokes. I would like to provide a community perspective on why the Opportunity Corridor should be named the Carl and Louis Stokes Opportunity Corridor.

The Opportunity Corridor is a transportation boulevard that will start at East 55th Street at Interstate 490 to East 105th Street in University Circle, running within the communities of Slavic Village, Kinsman, Buckeye-Woodland and Fairfax. The area surrounding the Opportunity Corridor is known as “The Forgotten Triangle” due to years of abandonment, disinvestment and lack of economic activity. Many Clevelanders have questioned who the Opportunity Corridor is for and who will benefit from the State of Ohio’s \$300+ million-dollar investment? Will it be a pass through to make it easier for people from downtown Cleveland to get to Cleveland Clinic faster and avoid the realities of communities that have been forgotten or will the new boulevard truly be a connector to help communities that need economic revitalization? I am of the belief that we can erase the image of “The Forgotten Triangle” and will continue to work with the Opportunity Corridor Steering Committee and other stakeholders to see the economic vision come to fruition for the community members.

The naming of the Opportunity Corridor to the Carl and Louis Stokes Opportunity Corridor will stand as a constant reminder of the greatness that comes from unlikely places. During the time when Congressman Stokes and Mayor Stokes were growing up in the Central community (the neighborhood that borders the Opportunity Corridor), I doubt anyone would have believed that the first Black Congressman for Ohio and the first Black Mayor of a major city would come from the neighborhood. The communities of Slavic Village, Kinsman, Buckeye-Woodland and Fairfax are not forgotten and will experience greatness through community and economic redevelopment as a result of collaborations/partnerships of people from people inside and outside the community.

The Stokes family is in support of naming the Opportunity Corridor the Carl and Louis Stokes Opportunity Corridor and we hope that we can have the support of the committee on House Bill 83. We will be happy to take any questions that you may have. Thank you for your time.