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**15<sup>th</sup> House District**

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Chairman Hambley, Vice Chair Patton, and Ranking Member Brown.

I want to thank you for this opportunity to address the House's Civil Justice committee in support of House Bill 463 which, if passed, this bill would update the jurisdiction of Municipal Courts across Ohio. Municipal Court jurisdiction has not been significantly adjusted in over two decades and, as a result, this update is long overdue.

Ohio Municipal Courts are created by statute, separate from Common Pleas courts created by the Ohio Constitution. As creatures of statute, the legislature has the authority but also the responsibility to ensure that these courts remain viable, open, and accessible to people that are most likely to use these local courts.

Currently, parties with lower dollar civil claims may bring these claims in a local municipal court, but only if the value of the case does not exceed \$15,000. The Ohio General Assembly established this \$15,000 cap in 1996 and it has not been adjusted for inflation in nearly a quarter century. If claims exceed \$15,000, either when the case is filed or if a counterclaim is filed by a Defendant, the entire case must be transferred to the County Common Pleas Court. As a result, the relatively low jurisdictional limit often has the effect of delaying justice or eliminating this court as an option to people that live in the very communities where these courts exist. This result is exacerbated by the yearly erosion of the jurisdictional limit due to inflation.

House Bill 463 increases the jurisdictional amount to account for inflation by increasing Municipal Courts' monetary jurisdiction from \$15,000 to \$30,000 and would also permit Municipal Court judges the right to hear counterclaims that exceed this amount if the case is first filed in a Municipal Court. Importantly, this bill does not make any adjustments to the jurisdiction of the Ohio's common pleas courts.

Those that support this bill, believe that these important jurisdictional modifications will maintain the viability of our local Municipal Courts while also ensuring that persons intending to resolve civil disputes can obtain civil relief fairly and efficiently.

I trust that this committee will give this legislation fair consideration and I once again thank you all for your time.