

November 20, 2019

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you all for the opportunity to Submit written proponent testimony in support of House Bill 325, which would designate February 18 as Toni Morrison Day in the state of Ohio.

Establishing Toni Morrison Day in the State of Ohio is a timely and important decision. Morrison, an Ohio native and Nobel Prize winner, is one of the most significant American writers of the 20th century. Her stature is equal to the most important novelists across U.S. history, from Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Harriet Beecher Stowe to William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway. Her novels of “magical realism” brought to life the experiences of African Americans whose stories had not been told in the American mainstream before, making them into beautiful art that changed readers’ perceptions of the truth of our history. Original and experimental in her use of form, Morrison never flinched from depicting the suffering of enslaved people or the abuse of the powerless, and she balanced hard truths with moments of revelatory joy. As a literary critic and scholar, she opened our eyes to the Black presence in the background of all the classics of American literature; as a teacher, she supported the development of a new generation of writers. But it is as a novelist that she will be remembered and celebrated—as one of the all-time great American novelists.

Yours,
Robyn Warhol



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