

Chairman Wiggins, Vice Chairman Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the State and Local Government Committee:

Thank you for allowing me brief proponent testimony for HB 618. My name is Eric Alberts. I am a resident of downtown Cleveland, Ohio. Regarding orders related to shutting down Ohio's economy for the current pandemic, I firmly believe that the citizens of Ohio were not presented with both sides of harms and benefits for making statewide policy decisions. Harms included but were not limited to massive unemployment, major unemployment assistance challenges, any of a number of mental health issues, and an increase in domestic abuse. There certainly appeared to be a lack in preparation back in spring to handle a massive spike in unemployment system capacity to handle claims. A balanced solution to handling the current pandemic, and to protecting rights of Ohioans, should include the involvement of the general assembly and not just the Governor and Department of Health. This is where HB 618 will assist.

In case of the possibility of abuse, I need to mention that I do not support anyone holding the position of Governor to define a virus as an "enemy" in the context of enemy attack exemption wording in HB 618. A virus does not have a conscience. It has no strategy. No governor should define a virus as an enemy in order to carry out actions such as the postponement of an election, or in the involvement of issuing any order without any end date. I have heard our Governor characterize the current virus as a personified enemy, and this is unacceptable wording from our Governor.

Please pass HB 618 for reasons I stated above. Thank you for reading this!

-Eric Alberts
955 W. St. Clair Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44113