

Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee  
Chair: Steve Wilson. Co-Chair: Rob McColley  
Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 346 to repeal HB 6  
Testimony of Ariel Miller, member, Becoming Beloved Community Leadership Team,  
Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio  
(written, not in person)

November 7, 2020

Chair Wilson, Co-Chair McColley, and Ranking Member Williams,

Thank you for creating the opportunity for public testimony on SB 346 to repeal HB 6. I speak as a Christian and member of the Diocese of Southern Ohio's leadership team for Becoming Beloved Community, the nationwide quest by the Episcopal Church to bring about racial reconciliation and justice. I am urgently asking you today to approve SB 346.

Repealing HB 6 gives us the chance to resume the energy efficiency program which is urgently needed for low-income tenants and senior citizens on fixed incomes. Ohio has an affordable housing crisis that is about to become a catastrophe because of the pandemic. This includes utility shut-offs. The Diocese of Southern Ohio is based in Cincinnati. Of our nation's 48 largest cities, Cincinnati renters bear the 8<sup>th</sup> highest energy burden (the proportion of monthly income paid for heat and light), and the 9<sup>th</sup> highest for African-Americans. Sixteen of Cincinnati's census tracts fall into the category of energy poverty.

Last year, the Revs. Joan Van Becelaere, Marcia Dinkins, and Dan Clark testified to your Committee that Ohio's energy efficiency programs saved Ohio businesses, households, and non-profits over \$4.5 billion in energy costs between 2009 and 2019. This steady improvement in energy and housing security has been killed by HB 6. I am begging you to resume this progress. Money spent on energy efficiency has generated thousands of good jobs in Ohio as well.

HB 6 takes money out of ratepayers' pockets to prop up investors who have stuck with nuclear and coal generation even though these are no longer competitive in the free market. Before HB 6 was passed by bribery, the state was pulling us all together to invest in programs that reduced poor people's monthly utility bills through weatherization and more efficient lighting. The energy efficiency programs were common sense policy promoting the common good. These investments were just, responsible, and part of a rapidly-growing job sector. As a ratepayer, I rejoiced to be part of this progress.

You are the public servants with the power to protect Ohioans as winter approaches and utility shut-offs loom. If it is not repealed, HB 6 will bleed \$1.3 billion from ratepayers to send to Energy Harbor. Please pass SB 346 to defend Ohioans who must depend on you this coming winter with Congress deadlocked on additional pandemic relief funding. By voting in favor of SB 346, you can also save Ohio taxpayers money by repealing HB 6 so Attorney General Yost can drop his lawsuit against Energy Harbor.

Then, once you've put an end to a terrible piece of corruption-fueled policy, please start public hearings to ensure a fair process in which all points of view can be heard, enabling you to build a state energy policy that will truly serve the public, both in economic stability and health.

Many of us are praying for you and your work, that you be just leaders who restore trust and accountability to Ohio's government. Thank you! Please act now to repeal HB 6.