Representative Paula Hicks-Hudson
44th House District

House Bill 533 Sponsor Testimony
March 29, 2022

Chairman Hillyer, Vice-Chair Grendell, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for scheduling this important legislation for sponsored testimony. My joint sponsor and I discussed this bill and believe that it is one important step to reassure the citizens of Ohio that we are truly about the work to restore and protect the trust that citizens give to us as their elected representatives.

As Representative Crossman stated, the concept of false claims enacted during the civil war. It has been known as the "Lincoln Law" because of this time frame. Unfortunately, the rampant scheming and swindling of that time continues today. While today we have better checks and balances, this legislation, when passed, will provide additional protections for making sure Ohioans' tax dollars are being spent on legitimate goods, supplies, and services.

There two additional things that I would like to add to my Join Sponsor's testimony. This legislation clarifies the role of the private citizen who knows of wrong doing and reports it. Much of what we have seen is when an employee blows the proverbial whistle, there can be retaliation against the employee. Our legislation will give an employee any relief necessary to make the employee "whole" who is discharged, demoted, suspended, threatened, harassed, or otherwise discriminated against in the terms and conditions of employment because of lawful acts in furtherance of an action or assistance in an action. As we all know, people generally, are fearful of losing their jobs if they speak up about wrongdoings on the job.

As my joint sponsor noted in his testimony, Ohio is in the minority of other states that have similar statues. Our legislation in not extreme and is in line with other Midwest states such as Indiana, Illinois, Indiana and Minnesota.

Lastly, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsored testimony on HB 533 and we are prepared to answer any questions that you may have.