



CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF OHIO

Proponent Testimony SB 46 Regarding Office and Commission on Eastern European Affairs House Government Oversight Committee

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, my name is Brian Hickey. I am an Associate Director of the Catholic Conference of Ohio. The Conference is the official representative of the Catholic Church of Ohio in matters of public policy. We thank Minority Leader Yuko and Senator Rulli for introducing Senate Bill 46 to create an office and commission on Eastern European Affairs.

The Catholic Church worldwide calls on communities to welcome, protect, promote, and integrate immigrants, especially those fleeing volatile areas of the world. We are grateful for the vibrancy that Eastern Europeans bring to the Catholic Church throughout Ohio and their cultural enrichment in our towns and cities. Ohio is the home of three Catholic Eastern rite eparchies, the Parma Byzantine Eparchy, the Romanian Catholic Diocese of Canton, and the Ukrainian Catholic Diocese of Parma, all of which extend to states throughout the United States.

SB 46 will help promote and integrate our Eastern European brothers and sisters across Ohio and assist their efforts in bringing further success to our state. With the enormous challenges for Ukrainians ahead, the Catholic Conference of Ohio is proud that our state can serve as a leader in the United States for supporting Eastern Europeans by creating this office and commission.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.