



Before the
HOUSE STATE AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Proponent Written Testimony
House Bill 237

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Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to support House Bill 237, which would modernize county recording processes to accommodate electronic means.

The Ohio Credit Union League is the state trade association representing the collective interests of Ohio's 243 federally and state-chartered credit unions and their more than three million members. With the "people helping people" philosophy at the heart of member-owned financial cooperatives, deploying digital service options to enhance the member experience is right in the credit union wheelhouse.

As a reintroduction of House Bill 797 from the 133rd General Assembly, House Bill 237 is an important step to establishing a baseline service capability across Ohio's 88 counties and transforming traditional recording processes to accommodate digital transaction and service trends. The current economic paradigm further exposes the frustration that the lack of across-the-board electronic recording and record access brings to Ohioans and their financial institutions. This includes credit unions needing to electronically record property conveyances or remotely access recorded instruments. If enacted, House Bill 237 would enable credit unions, among many others, to better help Ohioans access digital financial services and transactions.

The ongoing remote service environment experienced across the business community continues to highlight the need for a consistently strong and digital local government transaction process. As essential service providers, Ohio credit unions continue to adapt and meet safe operating standards while maintaining service continuity in a variety of ways, including sophisticated and secure mobile and digital account access to the lending, deposit, investment, payment, and financial education solutions critical to consumers and small businesses. Without adequately modernized public partners, some communities across the state may find it challenging to connect directly with vital aspects of a property transaction, such as searching for or recording an electronic instrument.

Ohio credit unions continue to be a trusted partner for Ohioans looking for affordable housing due to their consumer-friendly lending practices, which are designed to help all people achieve financial well-being. Keeping property transaction costs fair and affordable remains the priority for financial cooperatives. With the spirit of member impact and thrift at the forefront of the credit union service model, we encourage the Committee to carefully weigh the proposed recording fee modifications for any potential affordability consequences for consumers. To better guard against significant consumer impact, the Electronic Record Modernization Program, as contemplated in House Bill 237, would make meaningful contributions to financial empowerment and equity for all county recorders' offices without adding additional consumer costs.

The League applauds Representative Hillyer for his leadership in modernizing vital government services to better assist private partners, like credit unions, in meeting Ohioans' evolving needs. Ohio credit unions look forward to further empowering members through convenient and consistent service experiences if this legislation be enacted.

Thank you for the opportunity to support House Bill 237, and I am happy to provide additional information or field questions in support of the Committee's important work.