

## **Louis W. Blessing III**

State Senator  
8<sup>th</sup> Senate District  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
(614) 466-8068



## **Nickie J. Antonio**

State Senator  
23<sup>rd</sup> Senate District  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
(614) 466-5123

Chairwoman Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath, and Members of the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 61.

Firstly, SB 61 addresses concerns brought to my attention by my constituents as well as other property owners around the state regarding solar panel installation. Currently, there are instances in which HOAs completely block a person's ability to install solar panels. This bill will prohibit these associations from doing so, as long as the HOA does not own or maintain the roof or exterior walls where the panels will be placed. This language comes from months of work with the Community Associations Institute, ensuring clarity and effectiveness, should this become enacted law.

Secondly, there are a number of updates this legislation makes to improve consumer protections, clean up cumbersome language, and increase overall efficiency in communication between the associations and its members.

SB 61 would allow electronic communication between the association and unit owners, so long as the individual agrees, regarding upcoming meetings, permit notices, and enforcement assessments for violation of the community's rules and bylaws. If the email is returned undeliverable, these notices will be sent via regular mail.

To ensure balanced representation serving on the HOA and Condo Unit Owners Associations boards, SB 61 clarifies that a majority of the board may not consist of unit owners from the same unit or same lot.

This bill also establishes a continuing lien for condominiums as codified since 2010 for planned communities. Because this lien may be foreclosed in the same manner as a mortgage on real property, SB 61 seeks to clarify the procedure for bringing actions for foreclosure when necessary.

Finally, SB 61 aims to preserve member fees by establishing minimum insurance levels for blanket fidelity, crime, or dishonesty for any person who controls or disburses association funds. This ensures the owners are better protected if such a crime is committed.

SB 61 has the support of groups such as the Community Associations Institute, Ohio Realtors Association, Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund, as well as several individuals looking to add solar panels to their homes. The bill had no opponents and

passed unanimously out of the Senate General Government and Agency Review Committee as well as on the Senate Floor in the previous General Assembly.

Chair Gavarone and Members of the Committee, thank you again for your consideration of SB 61. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.