



**Ohio Association of Regional Councils (OARC)
Senate Local Government Committee
Proponent Testimony on HB 531
November 15, 2022**

Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath and esteemed members of the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee, thank you for considering the Ohio Association of Regional Councils' support for HB 531.

The Ohio Association of Regional Councils (OARC) represents the state's 24 councils of governments and regional planning commissions that provide transportation, economic development, air quality and water quality planning for regional areas across the state. Some of our members – the ones designated as regional planning commissions – are already granted the authority under Ohio law to contract with county prosecutors for legal counsel. However, ORC 309.09 unintentionally overlooks the inclusion of councils of governments (COGs), which serve similar purposes, in the list of local governmental entities authorized to opt for this cost-saving measure. We support the parity that HB 531 would provide by enabling a commonsense expansion of this permissive authority to COGs. In addition to being financially responsible, this option is more convenient for these public bodies, saving precious public time and resources.

We thank Rep. Ghanbari for his sponsorship of this bill and urge your support of the measure.