



**Representatives Terrence Upchurch  
and Adam Miller  
20<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> House District**

Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Galonski, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee - thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 150. This bill would prohibit landlords from discriminating against lawful forms of housing payment.

It is no secret that discrimination against economically disadvantaged minorities has existed in this country since its founding, but after the Fair Housing Act of 1968, landlords were no longer able to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin or disability. One would think that would be the end of this, but they have been able to continue these discriminatory practices through forms of payment.

All Ohioans deserve to have the opportunity to access affordable and quality housing without fear of discrimination, just because someone is getting help from the government does not mean they are not good tenant candidates. It just means our government did their job and made sure Ohioans received the aid they need.

**(Rep. Miller)**

Thank you Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Galonski and members of the committee for allowing us to testify on this important piece of legislation and thank you to my friend and joint sponsor for his leadership and dedication on this issue.

As Representative Upchurch said, this bill would simply prohibit discrimination against tenants based on form of payment – particularly the use of federal vouchers.

The Fair Housing Act of 1968, as amended in 1988, prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, or disability. But discrimination in housing, particularly against economic disadvantaged minorities continues. Public housing has shifted over the years from unit based to voucher based.

The use of vouchers was designed so a new form of redlining – discrimination in housing laws – would be eliminated and voucher recipients could find housing in communities of their choice.

In Ohio, approximately 34% of households rent their homes. More than 225,000 households in our state use a federal housing voucher to help pay the rent. Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher holders struggle to find a rental home.

***Committees:***

Ranking: Economic & Workforce Development  
Insurance  
Health Provider Services  
Ways and Means  
Agriculture

***Contact:***

(614) 466 7954  
rep20@ohiohouse.gov  
77 S. High St Columbus, OH 43215

This often stems from landlords who have blanket policies against accepting Section 8 voucher holders. In most areas, landlords are permitted under the law to openly discriminate against the possible tenants. This legislation will help prevent a new form of redlining and work to create true multi-income communities.

Federal vouchers are guaranteed funds. Landlords know this. They are, in fact, as the old saying goes, better than money. So those who discriminate on form of payment aren't doing it for business reasons.

Thank you and we are happy to answer any questions you may have.

***Committees:***

Ranking: Economic & Workforce Development  
Insurance  
Health Provider Services  
Ways and Means  
Agriculture

***Contact:***

(614) 466 7954  
rep20@ohiohouse.gov  
77 S. High St Columbus, OH 43215

**Q. Aren't you ignoring the requirements needed to accept a housing voucher? Inspections? Paperwork? That sort of thing?**

**A.** Thanks for your questions. This is a very important question because we hear that excuse a lot. But what little additional work needed to prove a safe/clean unit and file with the federal government, we believe are something landlords should easily be able to accomplish in return for rock solid, predictable payments from the federal voucher.

**Q. Doesn't this just crush the single unit renter trying to get ahead with a side hustle?**

**A.** No. The government requirements and inspections are not so arduous that someone providing a clean/safe unit cannot easily meet. HUD is in the business of finding housing units not looking for reasons to eliminate options. I would add, that we'd be happy to work with the committee for a carve out of smaller number units if that is will.

**Q. Aren't you just telling landlords what to do?**

**A.** That's an interesting take and I see your point. But there is no reason to have a blanket policy against Housing vouchers – other than discrimination against the poor. As I have said, the housing voucher is solid, guaranteed, and predictable. So any business should welcome this money. I find it hard to see a motive – other than discrimination.

**Q. What is the scale of this problem?**

**A.** In Ohio, approximately 34% of households rent their homes. More than 225,000 households in our state use a federal housing voucher to help pay the rent. Housing Choice Voucher holders struggle to find a rental home. Fifteen states have passed similar laws. And multiple local governments in the state have or are pursuing similar legislation.

***Committees:***

Ranking: Economic & Workforce Development  
Insurance  
Health Provider Services  
Ways and Means  
Agriculture

***Contact:***

(614) 466 7954  
rep20@ohiohouse.gov  
77 S. High St Columbus, OH 43215

***Committees:***

Ranking: Economic & Workforce Development  
Insurance  
Health Provider Services  
Ways and Means  
Agriculture

***Contact:***

(614) 466 7954  
rep20@ohiohouse.gov  
77 S. High St Columbus, OH 43215