

**Committees:**

**Ways and Means (Ranking Member)**

Finance and Appropriations

**Finance Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Development, and Natural Resources  
(Ranking Member)**

State and Local Government

Public Utilities

Armed Services



**23<sup>rd</sup> House District**

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**HB 173 Sponsor Testimony: House Families & Aging Committee**

Chair Schmidt, Vice-Chair Miller, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the House Families and Aging Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 173, which designates May as “Older Ohioans Month” in Ohio. This is requested to encourage and recognize the countless contributions that older adults make in our state. Seniors have provided a lifetime of work, service, and countless contributions to our state and communities. As a society, we have a responsibility that our older citizens age with respect, dignity, and financial security.

The first proclamation recognizing Older Americans was issued by President John F. Kennedy 60 years ago. At that time, a third of seniors lived in poverty, and almost half were without health insurance. Since that first proclamation, legislators and leaders passed Medicare, strengthened Social Security, and made important medical advancements to improve the lives of seniors. But as we know, there is more work to do.

During our last term, I introduced legislation that increased penalties for failure to report elder abuse, and it passed thanks to my colleagues in the last General Assembly, many of whom sit on this committee. There is still so much more that we need to do to protect them from the growing cottage industry of despicable scammers and schemers trying to separate our seniors from their hard-earned retirement income and savings.

According to a University of Miami study, 1 in 5 Ohioans will be over the age of 65 by the year 2030. Almost every Ohio county is expected to see an increase in the share of population of that age group. Baby boomers now make up the largest generation of older adults in US history.

Madame Chair, and Committee members, thank you for your attention and consideration. The mark of enlightened societies throughout the history of our world are those that honor their elders with the thanks and respect that they deserve. Let us officially enshrine the month of May as Older Ohioans in our state.