



**House Finance Committee
Proponent Testimony on House Bill 181
10/4/2023**

Chairman Edwards, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Sweeney, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 181 (HB 181).

Formed in 1910, Ohio REALTORS® is the state's largest professional trade association with approximately 37,000 members representing both residential and commercial practitioners, as well as auctioneers and appraisers. We also represent homeowners, homebuyers, as well as investors and support policies to protect private property rights.

We support efforts in HB 181 to modernize records and conveyances maintained by county recorders. Creating an online system to record and access documents in all 88 counties will make viewing documents related to the transfer of real property faster and more convenient.

In addition to supporting the digitization of county records, we also support language in ORC 5323.02 that would allow a rental unit owner's agent or representative to register a rental property with the county auditor. Current statute only allows a rental unit's owner to register the property when required by the county auditor. This change would extend the permission to an owner's agent or representative.

We do have concerns with HB 181 regarding the \$10 document preservation surcharge to support the cost of preserving and digitizing documents in the county recorder's office. Historically, our organization has opposed fees, taxes, and surcharges that increase the cost of homeownership. We understand the costs that the changes in HB 181 may impose upon county recorder offices, however we would urge this committee to be mindful of the rising cost of homeownership and attempt to limit the document preservation fee as much as possible. Similar legislation pending in the Senate (SB 94) sets the document preservation fee at \$5. We would urge the committee to reduce the document preservation surcharge established in HB 181.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments in support of HB 181.

Sincerely,

Scott Williams
Chief Executive Officer
Ohio REALTORS®



Ralph Mantica, 2023 President • **Scott R. Williams**, CEO

200 E. Town St. • Columbus, OH 43215-4648

P 614.228.6675 • F 614.228.2601 • info@ohiorealtors.org • www.ohiorealtors.org

