

Committees

Vice Chair Criminal Justice,
Higher Education, Primary and
Secondary Education, Economic
and Workforce Development



State Representative Joshua E. Williams
Ohio House of Representatives

Chair Peterson, Vice-Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 475.

HB 475 aims to safeguard taxpayer dollars by preventing municipalities, counties, and other local authorities from using public funds to support elective abortions or abortion services. Prior to the passage of Issue 1 in November, we witnessed instances where cities like Toledo, Cleveland, and Cuyahoga County allocated substantial sums for out-of-state travel related to abortions.¹²³ Now, with Issue 1 in effect, these cities have alternative avenues for funding elective abortion services. Recognizing the diversity of opinions among voters, HB 475 ensures that taxpayers are not compelled to finance services they fundamentally oppose.

Transparency is the bedrock of effective governance. Citizens have a right to know how their hard-earned money is allocated. I firmly believe in responsible use of public funds. HB 475 establishes a robust mechanism for tracking and controlling state allocations to local governments. By withholding funds from entities directly supporting elective abortions, we uphold fiscal responsibility and accountability. Public safety, education, and infrastructure should never be compromised in favor of facilitating abortions. HB 475 prevents the State of Ohio from subsidizing local governments that utilize tax dollars for elective abortion services.

¹ <https://www.cleveland.com/news/2022/09/following-roe-reversal-cuyahoga-county-approves-using-stimulus-funds-to-pay-for-out-of-state-abortion-travel.html>

² <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/253089/city-council-wants-to-use-dollar-100k-in-covid-funds-for-out-of-state-abortion-the-bishop-calls-that-outrageous>

³ <https://www.wtol.com/article/news/local/toledo-council/toledo-may-use-arpa-money-to-help-people-get-to-abortion-clinics/512-2fbf90cc-f8a1-4565-85fa-4b4935824c7a>

41ST HOUSE DISTRICT

LUCAS COUNTY

COLUMBUS OFFICE

VERN RIFFE CENTER
77 SOUTH HIGH STREET 11TH FLOOR
COLUMBUS, OH 43215-0253
PHONE: (614) 466-1418
REP41@OHIOHOUSE.GOV

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Specifically, the bill deducts from Local Government Funds (LGF) distributed to counties and municipalities at a 1:1 ratio for public funds used in elective abortion-related activities. This approach mirrors the principles of S.B. 163, which addressed traffic camera citations and was upheld by the Ohio Supreme Court in the 2022 verdict of *The Village of Newburgh Heights vs. The State of Ohio*, specifically targets elective abortions—those cases where a woman chooses to terminate a healthy pregnancy before term. While respecting individual autonomy, this bill underscores the sanctity of life.

Striking a balance between personal autonomy and safeguarding the vulnerable is paramount to good governance. HB 475 seeks to achieve this delicate equilibrium by specifically targets elective abortions where a woman chooses to terminate a healthy pregnancy before term. While respecting individual autonomy, this bill underscores the sanctity of life.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on this critical legislation. I am prepared to address any questions you may have.