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**Majority Floor Leader Bill Seitz
The Ohio House of Representatives**

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Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 315: Revise the Township Law

Chair John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 315. The legislature has successfully passed a township omnibus bill containing recommendations from the Ohio Township Association in just about every one of the 12 General Assemblies that I have served in. The purpose of this legislation is once again to accomplish that goal.

Ohio law currently mandates townships to publish public notices in a local newspaper, a practice that has become increasingly challenging and expensive as local newspapers are fewer and fewer in number and their subscribers are fewer and fewer in number as well. House Bill 315 proposes a practical solution by allowing townships to post public notices on their websites or social media platforms, providing a cost-effective alternative. This adjustment not only acknowledges the changing media landscape but also aligns townships with municipalities that were granted similar authority in last year's budget bill. Additionally, HB 315 extends the authority of townships to form new community authorities or modify existing ones. Initially limited to townships with specific population criteria, this permissive authority is now expanded to include urban townships with a population of at least 15,000 in the unincorporated territory. This expansion empowers local governance and reduces dependence on county commissioners for such decisions.

Recognizing the importance of preserving historic properties, HB 315 grants townships the authority to establish Township Preservation Commissions. Modeled after municipal commissions, this provision enables townships to participate in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program. By doing so, townships become eligible for federal grants supporting historic preservation activities, providing them with additional resources for community development.

Furthermore, HB 315 brings clarity to the process of issuing township zoning citations. While maintaining the existing fine structure, the bill explicitly defines zoning citations as civil fines

and establishes a systematic approach for their issuance. This modification enhances the effectiveness of zoning enforcement and ensures a fair and transparent procedure.

The legislation also addresses an outdated requirement related to township fiscal officers recording marks and brands of cattle. Given the contemporary irrelevance of this practice, HB 315 proposes to eliminate the mandatory book for marks and brands. This adjustment aligns township regulations with current needs and reduces unnecessary administrative burdens.

I will now turn it over to Representative Hall to explain the remaining provisions.

