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**Steve Demetriou**  
State Representative

## **Sponsor Testimony for HB 280**

Chairman Roemer, Vice Chairman Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy, and colleagues- thank you for allowing Representative Thomas and I some time to inform the Ways and Means Committee on why House Bill 280 is needed to expand the use of the Lead Abatement Tax Credit and ensure that municipalities that implement a lead safe certificate program do not make the process of compliance overburdensome for their property owners and taxpayers. These efforts are intended to help alleviate the housing crisis in Ohio by improving the process by which older homes are made safe for our families.

Representative Thomas and I want to ensure that families and investors who live in or purchase properties built before 1978 are safe from the health hazards that lead paint poses. However, it seems that few homeowners are aware that the State's Lead Abatement Tax Credit program exists. The State Legislature has already approved up to \$5MM in tax credits per year through the Department of Health. To give you an idea of how underutilized this program is – only \$53K of the available \$5MM had been taken advantage of in the last year on record according to LSC.

Taxpayers also should not be forced to deal with overburdensome processes that create out of pocket expenses for homeowners who live in municipalities that have implemented lead safe certificate programs, and many of the largest municipalities in our state have implemented these programs. Currently, it can take up to a year or more for lead abatement specialists to get reimbursed for costs related to lead abatement. This has forced some of these expenses to be passed on to the customer, i.e. homeowners. They have set the standard of compliance but have given their taxpayers the runaround on how to comply. Cleveland for example, has outsourced the operation of this program to inefficient groups who are difficult for vendors and citizens to deal with.

HB280 would simply allow more property owners to access money that the 134th General Assembly already set aside to give taxpayers some relief and create some accountability measures on behalf of taxpayers who own property in places that enforce lead safe certificate programs.

I'd like to welcome my joint sponsor, Representative Jim Thomas to go through some details of the bill.