

**House Ways and Means Committee
House Bill 451****Opponent Testimony****Western Union Financial Services, Inc.****June 4, 2024**

Chairman Roemer, Vice Chairman Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to House Bill (HB) 451. On behalf of Western Union Financial Services, Inc. (Western Union), I write today in opposition to HB 451, legislation that seeks to tax international money transmission. Western Union partners with a vast network of retail agent locations across Ohio to offer consumers services like cross-border, cross-currency remittances. Making this and other vital financial services accessible to all persons, whether through one of nearly 3,000 retail agent locations in Ohio or through digital means, is part of our commitment to helping people around the world build financial futures for themselves, their loved ones, and their communities. Western Union opposes HB 451 for several reasons.

Consumer Impact

Making basic financial services like money transmission arbitrarily more expensive would hurt consumers who can least afford it. Many people using these services, especially those routinely supporting loved ones abroad with remittances, may be disproportionately burdened as the proposed tax is significant and the refundable tax credit described in the bill is capped.

Harm to Local Businesses

Western Union services are offered at nearly 3,000 retail agent locations across Ohio including through businesses like Kroger, Giant Eagle, Walgreens and Meijer. These grocery stores, convenience stores, and other businesses would all be negatively impacted by this legislation. As consumers look to avoid this proposed tax, foot traffic through these businesses would decrease and lost revenue could extend to other products and services that may have been otherwise utilized.

Negative Impact on Law Enforcement Efforts

The costs imposed by a large tax increase like the one found in HB 451 could encourage consumers to move to unregulated and unmonitored channels to transmit their money. These transactions would not be regulated. This lack of visibility could harm law enforcement efforts in detecting and preventing money laundering and other illicit activity.

Western Union provides consumers with a safe and reliable way to send money to family and friends, pay bills, and obtain other financial services. HB 451 would not only be detrimental to Western Union's business, it would also be detrimental to consumers and businesses of all sizes.

Thank you for your attention. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information or discuss this matter further.

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