



**Testimony of Ben Kessler, Mayor of the City of Bexley, Ohio, in opposition to  
S.B. 104**

Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the committee, I am Ben Kessler, Mayor of the City of Bexley. On behalf of the City of Bexley and the Central Ohio Mayors and Managers Association, a consortium representing twenty Central Ohio communities, I am providing testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 104.

You have heard excellent testimony from other cities outlining the issues that can be posed by unregulated short term rentals in our community. Short term housing reduces the supply of much needed permanent housing; dilutes the essence of close-knit neighborhoods by essentially creating social and accountability gaps in residential areas; and, in my experience, is much more likely to be the source of complaints relative to noise, excessive activity, parking disruptions, etc.

Let me tell you about one of the incidents that led to the creation of Bexley's sensible and self-determinative regulation of short term rentals. It was several years back, and a large vacant house that was in transition was put up for short term rental. Soon after, the calls to city hall began to arrive. Partying, littering, excessive noise, parking congestion, late night police calls. The strain it put on our police, code enforcement, and city hall was unreasonable. Council members began to work collaboratively with my office to draft legislation. Within weeks, the rental became the center of a local scandal involving a very well known collegiate athletic program, a party that spun out of control, and a justifiably upset cadre of local neighbors. What could be done? The address: Parkview Avenue. One of the not-so-distant neighbors? The Governor's Residence.

Sure we have code enforcement, and police, and nuisance laws. Tell that to neighbors struggling to put their kids to sleep on a school night. Step in their shoes, see the what it's like to live next to an often-vacant, sometimes overcrowded party house where every occupant has no context or regard for the right to peace and quiet enjoyment that is stamped in law.

Bexley's solution has been simple and effective: we allow short term rentals. The rental needs to be under the control of an owner-occupant, and there is a cap of 30 days per year of short term rental. It provides flexibility and property rights to those owners, but it puts a stop to the de-facto zoning run-around that unregulated short term rentals accomplish.

Not every community chooses to regulate short term rentals, and that's okay. Home rule is what allows our cities to exercise self-determination; for the will of the local resident to shape the unique context of their neighborhoods. Please do not erode that important and cherished right, enshrined in our Ohio constitution. Please allow local communities – local democracy – to determine whether or not they are concerned about the negative consequences that short term rentals can pose.

Thank you for your time, and for your care and consideration.