



June 24, 2024

Chairman Shane Wilkin  
Senate Building  
1 Capitol Square  
Ground Floor 050  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Chairman Wilkin, Vice-Chair Hillyer, and members of the Ohio Sunset Review Committee, thank you for the opportunity for the Ohio History Connection to provide testimony today. There are three boards or commissions that fall under our purview for purposes of the Ohio Sunset Review Committee: Board of Trustees for the Ohio History Connection, the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board, and the Holocaust and Genocide Education Commission. We are requesting reauthorization of all three, however, the latter two you will hear from two of my colleagues as I will be providing testimony on behalf of the Ohio History Connection Board of Trustees.

For some background, the Ohio History Connection, formerly the Ohio Historical Society, is a statewide history organization with the mission to spark discovery of Ohio's stories. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization chartered in 1885, the Ohio History Connection carries out history services for Ohio and its citizens focused on preserving and sharing the state's history. This includes housing the State Historic Preservation Office, the official state archives and the Community Engagement Department and managing more than 50 sites and museums across Ohio.

The Board of Trustees serves as the Governing Body for the Ohio History Connection and is made up of nine Governor Appointed Trustees, nine Member Elected Trustees, and three Board Elected Trustees. The Board of Trustees ensures the organization manages its operations, finances and programs to further its mission and strategic goals by providing dedicated leadership and support. As such, the Board of Trustees meets at least four times per year as well as on special occasions.

The Board of Trustees oversees the employment of around 250 people statewide at the over 50 sites that the Ohio History Connection has jurisdiction. It also oversees a budget that currently sits at around \$30 million.

As part of the work of the board, they recently in February of this year approved a new Strategic Plan that outlines our objectives and goals for FY 2025-FY 2030. Two main objectives for the Board of Trustees are: Capitalizing on World Heritage Inscription and Enhancing the Main Campus of the Ohio History Connection. Additionally, we have compiled and prioritized a list of eight main projects that the organization is currently working on. Those projects include the following:

- Collections Care Center
- Ohio Village Revitalization
- Ohio River Museum
- Fort Laurens 250<sup>th</sup>
- Poindexter Village
- Great Council State Park
- Ohio Showcase at Expo Center
- Harriet Beecher Stowe House

This list of eight main projects will constantly be updated as we have completed many of these projects and will complete more in the coming years.

In conclusion, the Board of Trustees for the Ohio History Connection serves a vital role in the day-to-day operations of the Ohio History Connection and provides a valuable service to the organization as the organization serves as the state's non-profit history partner. We respectfully ask for reauthorization of this board.

Chair Wilkin, Vice-Chair Hillyer, and members of the Ohio Sunset Review Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.