

*****Below is the press release on a panel discussion on House Bill 563 held today at the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and here is the link to the video of the panel conversation: <https://youtu.be/MUGh1MCT1N4>**



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Ohio Chamber Hosts Panel Discussion on Short-Term Rental Legislation

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Chamber today hosted a panel discussion on House Bill 563 (HB 563), legislation sponsored by State Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur (R – Ashtabula) and State Representative Ron Ferguson (R – Jefferson, Monroe and Belmont). The legislation prohibits an outright ban on short-term rentals (STRs) while retaining local government’s right and responsibility to create regulations for the health and safety of the community, public nuisance or curtailing illegal activities.

Short-term rentals make it easier for tourists to access the many different communities across Ohio, while providing them with a more unique, personalized experience that many travelers find desirable. “The current restrictions on STRs in some communities adversely impact Ohio’s tourism industry and our small business climate,” Ohio Chamber President and CEO Steve Stivers said. “Rental hosts, like those who rent out their property for tourists, are small-business owners. We should be supporting their entrepreneurial spirit, not trying to prevent it through local regulation.”

Tourism is an important part of the state’s economy, with Ohio’s Tourism Industry bringing in over \$42 million in 2017 alone. In 2019, Ohio was ranked the 13th “Most Fun” state to visit in a study released by personal finance website WalletHub – putting Ohio five states ahead of Michigan and slightly below Pennsylvania, Florida, and California. As families change the way they travel, over 12,500 Ohioans are currently opening their homes to STRs through the Airbnb platform alone. With nearly 800,000 travelers planning a trip to Ohio through a STR platform, there is a need to update Ohio laws to prevent overregulation of hosts and provide consistency for travelers.

“Ohioans should always have the right to use what is often their most valuable asset, their homes, as an investment to make money through short-term rental,” said Fowler Arthur. “Short-term rentals also help drive traffic to countless small businesses - restaurants, shops and tourist attractions - across the state. Eliminating short-term rentals hurts Ohio’s economy.”

Some municipalities and local governments have begun to oppose community members renting out their properties through Airbnb, VRBO or other short-term rental platforms. This obstructs local residents and small businesses from inviting tourism into the area, reduces tax dollars available to the local and state governments and creates an environment that opposes new business or business growth.

"Private property rights are a cornerstone of capitalism, and this legislation will ensure a free market for all Ohioans," said Ferguson.

Furthermore, scattered, inconsistent regulations across Ohio put the state at a disadvantaged position among other states in the Midwest region. A single statewide regulatory framework is needed to manage STRs accurately and fairly while promoting small businesses, private property rights and a strong economy for all Ohioans.

House Bill 563 supports the right of individuals to earn a legal livelihood using their residence or rental property, encourages small business growth and will ensure tourism continues to grow in Ohio.

"Home sharing is an essential part of the way I support myself and add value to the community," said short-term rental host Jeff Smith. "I look forward to discussing with legislators the real-life impact this bill will have on community members."

Participants in today’s panel discussion included:

- Brent Swander, CEO, Columbus Realtors
- State Representative Sarah Fowler Arthur
- State Representative Ron Ferguson
- Jeff Smith, Short-Term Rental Host
- Jennifer Carroll, Short-Term Rental Host
- Steve Stivers, Ohio Chamber of Commerce President and CEO

As the state's leading business advocate and resource, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce aggressively champions free enterprise, economic competitiveness and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans. With members ranging from small businesses to international companies, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce represents Ohio's business voice.

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