



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OHIO**

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Testimony on SB 280, Metropolitan Housing Authorities
Before the Senate State and Local Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
The Honorable Kris Jordan, Chair
By Karen Rainey, Housing Advocate
April 18, 2012

Chairman Jordan and members of the committee:

I am Karen Rainey, a volunteer advocate for the League of Women Voters of Ohio. The League has a long history of support for fair housing--for programs and policies that provide for equal opportunity for access to housing without discrimination. The League's concern with SB 280 is that it may serve to perpetuate discrimination and limit access to housing at the same time that it appears to expand diversity.

We understand that this legislation has been introduced in response to a particular situation relating to the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority. We are also aware that promoting scattered-site housing has been a federal housing initiative for many years and the CMHA needs to respond to pressure from HUD to place public housing in less concentrated areas. The leverage provided by the federal government through its funding of housing programs should be used to expand opportunity for access to housing and overcome patterns of discrimination.

However, we are not assured that the changes proposed will allow for the effective diversification of public housing and access to housing without discrimination. We join with other housing advocates in our concern that the proposed expansion of the CMHA board will dilute the voices of those most affected by the work of CMHA.

We ask that you consider unintended consequences when debating this change. Our hope is that your decisions will be based on the best way to make a favorable impact on fair housing.

The League of Women Voters of Ohio, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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