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*Advocating for Life, Faith, and Freedom in the Public Square*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Ohio Pastor Protection Act Passes the Ohio House

Today, religious freedom took another step forward here in Ohio with the passage of the Ohio Pastors and Churches Protection Act, H.B. 36., sponsored by State Rep. Nino Vitale and 27 co-sponsors. After languishing in committee for over a year, H.B. 36 finally received a vote in the House Community and Family Advancement Committee.

OCA President Chris Long stated the following, "We have known for some time that we had the votes in committee. It was just a matter of timing as to when leadership would allow this bill to go forward. Having been frustrated with its delay, we are now thankful that the bill is moving forward. Dozens of clergy from various denominations, including the Catholic Conference, came in and testified in support of H.B. 36. With new threats to religious liberty, the time has now come to enact statute legislation in Ohio to address these new challenges and underscore the Constitutional rights of religious freedom and the practice thereof. No individual should be coerced against their religious conscience. No religious society should be forced by the State or a municipality to violate their sincerely held religious beliefs. It is for that reason that we applaud the passage of the Ohio Pastor Protection Act, H.B. 36."

It is our hope that the Ohio Senate will quickly take up H.B. 36, and then pass it and send it to Governor Kasich for his signature. Legislative protection of Ohio's pastors and churches should never take a back seat. Religious freedom is the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. We encourage the Ohio Senate Chamber to make its mark in support of religious freedom by passing H.B. 36, the Ohio Pastor Protection Act.

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