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Testimony to House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee
Gary Lee, Union County Commissioner
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Good morning, Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke and Ranking Minority Member Clyde, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of HB342.

My name is Gary Lee, and I am here representing the Union County Board of Commissioners as well as the County Commissioners Association of Ohio. I have been honored to serve the residents and businesses of Union County since 2003. I currently serve on the Board of Directors for the County Commissioners Association, and I served as CCAO's president in 2013. I also serve on the CCAO Joint Committee on Administration of Elections.

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio has a long-standing policy of supporting efforts to contain and when appropriate reduce the overall cost of elections, including efforts to curtail special elections which add to election costs for local governments in each county. CCAO supported the elimination of the special election in February which was recently adopted by the General Assembly. We would like to thank the General Assembly for their action in eliminating the February special election.

HB 342 proposes to limit local tax-related proposals primarily to general and primary elections. Currently, many tax related proposals may also appear on the special election ballot in August. Eliminating tax issues at special elections would result in savings for local governments, as the cost of placing a single issue before the voters in a special election is typically charged back to the taxing district that proposed the tax levy. These charge backs do not encompass the wear and tear on the voting machines.

We believe that the option of placing a tax issue before the voters twice a year in November and May provides ample opportunity for local governments to plan and conduct levy campaigns. We understand that placing issues before the voters in a special election in August may lead to reduced voter turnout, as voters do not expect to be going to the polls in August.

HB 342 also updates the law to provide that ballot language express millage in terms of \$100,000 of fair market value instead of \$100 dollars of taxable value as required by existing law. This is a reasonable change that modernizes the terminology of the law to more accurately reflect the millage dollar valuations in terms that the public can understand.

I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 342. I would be happy to attempt to answer any questions of the committee at this time.