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Sponsor Testimony House Bill 720
State and Local Government Committee
November 15th, 2018

Chair Anielski, Vice-Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes, and Members of the State and Local Government Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 720, which would require voter approval for county sales tax to be increased.

Tax increases at all levels are unacceptable. However, if an increase is going to occur at the local level, the people should have a say in approving it. Citizens should have a voice in decisions that will affect the hard earned money coming out of their pockets. There should be no new taxes without a voice. In my district, the Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners recently increased county sales tax without input from the citizens who will be paying these taxes. This is unfair to the citizens of Montgomery County, as well as any other counties who have experienced this, and HB 720 seeks to correct this injustice.

HB 720 would modify the procedures for the approval or disapproval of a proposal to increase a county sales tax. This bill will require a vote of the people to approve or disapprove of a proposal to increase a county sales tax increase. The board of elections will submit the question of levying the tax or increasing the rate of tax to the electors of the county, and will not go into effect unless it is approved by a majority of the electors voting on the question of the tax. Under current law, a board of county commissioners can unilaterally vote to raise the county sales tax. However, all local governments such as school boards, townships, and cities must vote to place a levy on the ballot for a tax increase.

This bill would leave the question of tax increases up to voters, the ones who would be paying the tax, and the ones who should have a voice in the matter. Our hard working citizens deserve to have a say about how they will spend the money they earn.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 720. I would be happy to take any questions.