

Good morning, representatives and chairman Schaffer,
Over the past several years Ohio Citizens have expressed concern for the lack of transparency and what they believe to be designed and intentional confusion over ballot language in reference to school district property tax levies.

Many other concerned citizens approached me at a recent statewide meeting I was attending. Citizens often express education concerns to me as I am the President of the Ohio School Boards Leadership Council. OSBLC is an all volunteer organization of current and former school board members which coach citizens, school board members and educators about the many issues facing education.

While serving on two school boards and for the last 5 years of service on OSBLC, continued frustrated citizens complain about ballot language being confusing. While serving on these two school boards, board discussions revolved around "getting the money". Many of my fellow board members would state that they only needed 50% + 1 to pass the levies and that ballot language would be helpful in deceiving (informing) this 50% +1.

While serving on the Warren County Career Center the board voted to place a Replacement levy on the ballot. While discussing this levy, two board members conveyed that renewals almost always pass and that we should put a replacement on the ballot to capitalize on the chances that the public would not know the difference. These two board members weighed in on how so many people do not know the difference between a replacement and a renewal so they had a good chance of passing a replacement for more money.

Five of the seven school board members were retirees of the public education system and/or currently teaching in the Career Center so were only interested in passing the levy not focused on the deceptive methods they were agreeing to to get passage.

HB 488 is essential to Ohio citizens in gaining an understanding of what the school district is actually requesting. In a culture where our liberty is constantly being reduced by overspending by our government, our citizens deserve to know the truth about how much their vote will impact their liberty in terms of cash out of pocket and in terms of their property values.

Please pass HB 488 as is.

Dr. Kelly Kohls
President, Ohio School Boards Leadership Council