



Representative Brian Baldrige
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Sponsor Testimony- House Bill 444
State and Local Government Committee
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The Ohio Township Omnibus Legislation creates the following new provisions:

- **First, it mandates that municipalities provide adequate notice of conforming boundaries. This provision is extremely important due to the fiscal impact on townships. The notice ensures the township enough time to prepare for and manage that cost.**
- **It also updates the Ohio Revised code to make the nuisance statutes consistent.** There are currently three nuisance statutes that help townships deal with structures, property, and junk vehicles. Unfortunately, all three of those statutes use different language as it relates to collection on the costs a township incurs to abate said nuisance. This legislation is needed to update the code to make all three sections uniform.
- **Furthermore, House Bill 444 puts some minimum standards in place regarding the transfer of cemeteries.** Townships are currently required to take control of cemeteries from religious or benevolent organizations without stipulation, which has been burdensome in certain situations. For example there is nothing to prevent a cemetery from being transferred simply because the owner wishes to stop caring for it, and there is no requirement that a church transfer cemetery records or cemetery funds to the township, which is vital for the upkeep.

- **This legislation additionally allows for another source of revenue for townships through Industrial Development Bonds.** These are a unique type of revenue bond organized by state and local governments, however the proceeds are directed to a private, for-profit business. Under this bill, townships could use them as economic development tools just as cities and counties currently can.
- **House Bill 444 also addresses public safety concerns by making emergency responses more efficient.** Under current law, EMS providers at the Emergency Medical level cannot respond an ambulance from the station alone even if they are meeting a higher level EMT at the scene. This leads to increased response times waiting to rendezvous at the station. This legislation would allow them to meet at the scene, saving time and helping to best utilize township resources.
- **Finally, House Bill 444 addressed levees in two ways.** First, it creates a continuous police and fire levy. Unlike individual police levies and fire levies, a joint police and fire levy cannot be continuous and must be voted on every 5 years. This legislation makes joint levies continuous as well. Second, this legislation clarifies the ORC language regarding when a levy can commence. This is a fix as a result of a recent Supreme Court decision which upheld a county board of elections decision to disqualify a township property tax levy because of unclear language.

Chairman Wiggam and members of this committee, thank you again for allowing us to provide testimony. We would be happy to answer any questions at this time.