



Senate Ways and Means Committee
Testimony on SB 212
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Ohio Association of County Boards of DD
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Chair Roegner, Vice-Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee; thank you for the opportunity to speak about Senate Bill 212 on behalf of the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities.

County boards of DD fund and coordinate a lifetime of essential services and supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families. Local, voter-approved property tax levies are the foundation upon which our entire state's DD system is built, accounting for roughly two thirds of DD funding statewide. Without these resources, the life-changing services and supports that 94,000 Ohioans rely upon would not be possible. For this reason, any proposal that seeks to eliminate a portion of these resources must be considered with the utmost scrutiny to ensure it does not jeopardize the ability of people with developmental disabilities to live happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives.

As written, Senate Bill 212 promises to create new and improved housing stock through the use of property tax exemptions for the construction of new homes in certain circumstances. We agree that Ohio has many housing challenges, and we applaud Senator Schuring for seeking creative solutions to this problem. However, we urge you to allow people with developmental disabilities, who are themselves uniquely disadvantaged by the lack of affordable and accessible housing in the state, an opportunity to have a voice in the matter or otherwise see some kind of tangible benefit.

For this reason, we ask the committee to amend the bill to give county boards of DD the same mechanism that local school districts are granted under the current proposal to review the percentage of valuation of the proposed exemptions. County boards are similarly situated to school districts in that they rely heavily on local property taxes to operate; however, they are different from school districts in that they do not receive a per-person subsidy from the State of Ohio and are legally required to serve people throughout their entire lifespans. Property tax decisions have far-reaching consequences over the lifespan of people with developmental disabilities in Ohio, and we believe county boards should have a seat at the table when these decisions are being made on behalf of the people they serve.

In addition, we also ask the committee to require a meaningful portion of any new construction developed under the statute to fall within the guidelines and requirements set forth for disability-accessible housing under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Housing issues uniquely affect thousands of people with developmental disabilities across Ohio due to the lack of affordable and accessible housing solutions. By implementing such a requirement in Senate Bill 212, the General Assembly can help to at least partially mitigate the impact of forgone revenues to county boards from this new construction by ensuring that all Ohioans—regardless of their ability level—can reap the benefits of new housing stock created under these tax exemptions.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. I am happy to answer any questions at this time.