



**State Representative Brian Hill**

**97<sup>th</sup> House District**

**H.B. 531 Sponsor Testimony**

**Date: May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice-Chair Arndt, Ranking Member Rogers, ladies and gentlemen of the Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak as the sponsor of House Bill 531. H.B. 531 requires townships to provide mileage reimbursements to members of their boards of townships trustees or to their fiscal officers for travel within the township that is a necessary part of the board member or fiscal officer's duties.

Township trustees and fiscal officers would receive a travel reimbursement per mile from the township treasury at the same mileage rate allowed for the reimbursement of travel for state agents. Township trustees and fiscal officers are currently permitted to be reimbursed for mileage for travel outside of the township related to their official duties, but are unable to claim reimbursement for mileage related to official duties within the township.

Townships maintain over 41,000 miles of Ohio's roads, the most of any type of jurisdiction. Township trustees are responsible for inspecting roads to ensure they are of quality and not in need of repair. Many townships do not have road crews or township vehicles, so township trustees are usually inspecting the roads in their personal vehicles. Townships are laid out in 6x6 square mile areas, and many rural townships maintain this size, which is a fairly large land mass to maintain and can contain many roads. In rural areas, there are not the type and number of businesses available as in more urban areas. Banks, post offices and office supply stores are not right around the corner; rather, in some cases, these are located 10-15 miles away.

Pursuant to two Attorney General Opinions from the late 1950's, township trustees are to furnish their own transportation and when such travel is within the township, and may not collect any expense in connection with the use of their cars on the township

business within the township. Unless the travel for township business is outside of the township, no mileage may be collected. With township trustees using their own vehicles to inspect roads and conduct business essential to their official duties within their township, it seems fair to allow them to be reimbursed for mileage to make up for the wear and tear and gas usage accumulated using their personal vehicles. This bill will simply permit mileage reimbursement for all travel related to the trustee or fiscal officer's official duties.

Thank you all again for allowing me to testify on HB 531, and at this time I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.