



Ohio Board of Tax Appeals

**Testimony of Kathleen Crowley, Executive Director
Senate Finance Subcommittee on
General Government and Agency Review Subcommittee
May 18, 2017**

Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member O'Brien and members of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on General Government and Agency Review my name is Kathleen Crowley, and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Board of Tax Appeals. Thank you for the opportunity to present information on the Board of Tax Appeals budget request for fiscal years 2018-2019.

The total proposed budget request for the Ohio Board of Tax Appeals is \$1,850,307.00 in FY2018 and \$1,886,042.00 in FY2019. This request is a decrease from our 2016-2017 budget.

The Ohio Board of Tax Appeals' mission, as Ohio's administrative tax court, is to provide taxpayers and taxing authorities with an accessible, fair and efficient process to resolve tax appeals in a timely and judicious manner by issuing written decisions which are based upon Ohio statutes, case law and Board precedent.

The Board of Tax Appeals resolves cases from seven (7) different types of governmental agencies related to 62 different tax types. The agency relieves the overburdened state judicial system from having to adjudicate these appeals, and satisfies the constitutional requirements of due process. This process is conducted by an agency unaffiliated with any potential parties to a case. In addition, taxpayers are assured their appeals will be reviewed and considered by Board members and attorney examiners who focus exclusively on tax issues and have considerable expertise in tax matters.

The Board of Tax Appeals is composed of three (3) board members and currently employs eleven (11) full-time employees. The employees consist of the Executive Director, four (4) administrative personnel, five (5) attorneys and one (1) paralegal.

The Board of Tax Appeals understands that the certainty of future revenue and expense streams contributes to a “job friendly climate” and encourages investment and job creation. However, parties to a tax appeal are effectively put into a financial holding pattern while their case is pending before the Board, and cases that linger unresolved for years create uncertainty and contribute to fiscal constraint.

Through gains in operational efficiencies, in FY2016 and FY2017, the Board eliminated (3) three full time positions, which reduced the Board’s staff from (14) fourteen to (11) eleven full time positions. The vast majority of the Board’s costs are driven by human resources, and these costs continue to increase. Based upon the funding levels for the next biennium that are proposed by House Bill 49 the Board will need to eliminate another full-time position in FY2018. The prospect of eliminating another full-time employee raises concerns about the Board’s ability to serve the public at adequate levels.

With a reduced staff is it likely the Board will return to previous multi-year backlogs, lengthy customer delays, and the unnecessary tie-up of homeowner and business funds. To avoid these concerns, the Board of Tax Appeals respectfully requests our budget be funded in FY2018 at **\$1,850,307.00** and in FY2019 at **\$1,886,042.00**.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions.