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Testimony of Jeff Dornbusch on HB 343

December 5, 2018

Chairman Eklund, Vice Chair Terhar and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, my name is Jeff Dornbusch, Treasurer of Port Clinton City Schools, Port Clinton Ohio. I am here today to provide opposition testimony to HB 343.

This bill proposed/amended is a great example of passing a new law that is burdensome, regulatory and at the end of the day, produces winners and losers regarding the taxes certain homeowners pay.

It appears the proposed bill is intended to limit a school's ability to challenge property values when there is a discrepancy between the current auditor's value and the current market value. The proposed legislation also appears to create new regulations and unnecessary additional burdens for the same purpose. Due to the makeup of our school district, we have many second homes and vacation homes that are often sold at amounts much larger than what is on the current county auditor's records.

Our locally elected Board of Education made a decision many years ago to challenge values when the sale price is greater than \$75,000 of what the auditor has on their books. It is our local Board of Education's belief that this is not only fair but contend we have an obligation to all of our taxpayers to share the tax liability fairly. This can be easily understood with our current emergency levy and our bond debt levy. Any increase that is approved works to lower the burden for other taxpayers in the district.

Another reason we oppose this bill is the Port Clinton City School District has lost over \$2,000,000 in State Funding over the past 10 years **WITHOUT** a reduction in student population. Most of this has come through the elimination of TPP taxes and TPP reimbursements. The state funding formula does not work for our school district because the high property value in one of our townships distorts and totally negates the below average income of many of our families who live in our city. Our current free/reduced rate for our elementary students stands at 50%.

We also oppose this bill because we see it as way to politicize the valuation process. No one likes to have their taxes increased and we see this bill as an attempt to pressure

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local boards to help reduce one taxpayer's real estate bill at the expense of the rest of the property owners in the district. Every person that has their value challenged already receives notice and has the right to attend and contest their value at the board of revision hearing. Please also realize the same right to appeal exists for those who buy properties below the auditor's books, and they exercise that right with regularity.

Each board member receives a list of complaints filed by our attorney (fee for service based-fyi). Our attorney only files after we review this list with the board and superintendent. We file on each property, noting that no exceptions have been made to ensure consistency. We have filed on our own employees, our neighbors and our families. Each resident receives a letter from the school informing them why the school is filing the complaint. We have had meetings with our local realtors to explain this process so they can in turn share it with their clients to avoid any surprises.

I also happen to be a member of a board of education in my home district just ten miles away. In this district, the board chooses not to file on residential sales. Each district is unique and has an elected board to make these decisions on a local level. This is why we oppose new legislation that imposes additional regulations and overly burdensome rules as to how a local school should govern.

Chairman Eklund, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I will be happy to answer any questions committee members may have.