



City of North Royalton

Dan Langshaw

Ward 3 Councilman

Safety Committee, Chairman

*Storm Water Committee, Vice
Chairman*

*Review & Oversight Committee,
Member*

**North Royalton Ward 3 Councilman Dan Langshaw
House Bill 62 Testimony
Ohio House Finance Committee
March 5, 2019**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and committee members. My name is Dan Langshaw and I am the Ward 3 Councilman on the North Royalton City Council. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 62 that creates the FY 2020-2021 transportation budget.

I apologize I am unable to travel to Columbus today to provide my testimony in person. I am interested party in the important debate that is being taken place in regards to House Bill 62. Like many other elected officials throughout the state of Ohio. My residents and I are concerned about Governor Mike DeWine's proposal to increase the states gas tax to pay for repairing Ohio's aging infrastructure. Our state's current gas tax is now 28 cents per gallon. The last increase was in 2005. If passed as proposed, the new 46-cent-per-gallon gas tax would rise each year, beginning July 1, 2020, "at the same rate as the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI)," according to the Legislative Service Commission. (For the 12 months that ended in January, the increase in the CPI for all urban consumers was 1.6 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.)

Now I agree investment in repairing our state's aging infrastructure is desperately needed. However, I respectfully disagree with such a large tax increase to achieve such a proposal. Such a tax would not be even thought of if the state of Ohio didn't betray the original intent of the Local Government Fund which was established in the 1930s to help local governments throughout the state to repair infrastructure and other urgent needs of local governments. This funding is supposed to return money from Columbus back to the local governments who are the closest to ensuring the needs of the people that live in their respective communities. A study done earlier this year by Policy Matters Ohio reported that cuts in local government funds and tax changes made at the state level cost Ohio counties and communities an estimated \$1.2 billion dollars in 2017, as compared to 2010.

Since 2011 the state has made deep cuts to local government fund through slashing it in half from 3.68% to 1.66% today. As a result my own city has experienced over \$5 million dollars in state local government funding cuts. Recently, I joined a group of over a dozen elected officials age 40 and under throughout Cuyahoga County to express our concerns directly about this issue and more. Attached is a copy of our letter.

In closing, to tax or not to tax. I suggest instead the General Assembly approves House Bill 48 introduced by Representative Greenspan to create a local government improvement fund. Also approve

House Bill 54 introduced by Representatives Cera and Rogers to increase the tax revenue allocated to local government funding. Both of these pieces of legislation are a better alternative than increasing the burden on Ohio taxpayers. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. I am happy to answer any questions you may have. I can be reached at 440-785-4240 or at ward3@northroyalton.org.

Honorable Governor Mike DeWine
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Dear Governor DeWine,

We represent the future of elected officials; all of us are elected officials age 40 and under throughout Cuyahoga County. We are concerned about the future of our communities and the entire state of Ohio. As young community leaders, we understand what young families are looking for in their forever community. Ohio loses more college graduates than we gain from other states, which means that we have work to do to keep young educated individuals.¹ As you prepare for the biennial budget, we hope that you take the following into consideration.

You stated throughout your campaign for Governor and since taking office that you want to be a partner who works with local officials to restore the local government fund to a certain level.² The Local Government Fund is supposed to return money from Columbus back to the local governments who are the closest to ensuring the needs of the people who live in their respective communities. Ideally, we would like the local government fund restored to the 3.68% of the total amount of state tax revenue credited to the General Revenue Fund that Senate Bill 17 introduced in the 132nd General Assembly called for. However, we understand that the money would have to come from somewhere and we would be more than willing to help create a solution that is good for the state and fair to local governments. The Ohio General Assembly has repeatedly decreased funding and revenue with local governments through phasing out tax reimbursements, estate taxes, and the local government fund. According to Policy Matters Ohio, local governments around the state have lost nearly \$1.2 billion (adjusted for inflation) in 2017 when compared to 2010 funding due to these changes.³ As you know as a former county official, these funds are used for critical services for Ohioans including police, fire, and law enforcement. Furthermore, by allowing levies to adjust for inflation, it would allow for revenue to increase with the increase in expenses due to inflation, resulting in less of a need to ask voters for money.⁴ We urgently need funding for our municipalities throughout Ohio to foster safe communities, maintain sound infrastructure, increase economic development, and improve the overall welfare of our state.

Our constituents wonder why there are so many communities having to cut services. They wonder why local leaders have to put more levies, bond issues, and other financial measures on the ballot in recent years. They wonder why the highways, roads, bridges, and infrastructure are falling apart in our state. Both of these are because local governments are not getting the funding they desperately need to address these important issues in our communities.

Additionally, we believe funding of public transportation systems across the state is important for Ohio's residents. Public transportation systems around the state, including RTA in Northeast Ohio, have had to cut services and raise fees to make up for loss in funding from state and federal resources. Ohio ranks

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/22/upshot/the-states-that-college-graduates-are-most-likely-to-leave.html>

² <https://www.wksu.org/post/dewine-makes-no-promises-restoring-local-government-fund#stream/0>

³ https://www.cleveland.com/metro/index.ssf/2017/01/ohio_communities_counties_have.html

⁴ <https://www.westerville.k12.oh.us/docs/HB%20920%20Analysis.pdf>

44th in spending on public transportation. The 2018-19 House budget appropriated \$6.5 million on public transit, which was the lowest amount since 1976.⁵

Finally, Ohio needs to prepare for the future, including investing in broadband and technology and renewable energy sources. Our state needs to remain competitive for businesses and individuals/families to want to move to and remain in Ohio. Connection through broadband is a way of the future, and Ohio should be ahead of the game when it comes to bringing this technology to cities, urban, suburban and rural. Investing in renewable energy through partnerships will be beneficial to long-term costs of energy and the environment. Innovative projects, like the solar farm that was built on a landfill in Brooklyn, are just the start of what Ohio can achieve to further our renewable energy state-wide.⁶

We want to work together with you as our Governor and leadership in the Ohio General Assembly in hopes to address state funding in a bipartisan effort that will benefit all communities throughout Ohio.

Sincerely,

Sara Byrnes Maier, City of Bay Village Council, Ward 3
James Pasch, City of Beachwood Council Vice President
Eric Synenberg, City of Beachwood Council
Meg Ryan Shockey, City of Brooklyn Council
Brian Poindexter, City of Brook Park Council
Erinn Grube, Village of Chagrin Falls Council
Jasmin Santana, City of Cleveland Council, Ward 14
Christine McIntosh, City of Euclid Council, Ward 5
Tristan Rader, City of Lakewood Council
Daniel O'Malley, City of Lakewood Council, Ward 4
Dan Langshaw, City of North Royalton Council, Ward 3
Paul Marnecheck, City of North Royalton Council, Ward 4
Candace Williams, Oakwood Village Council, Ward 5
Ed Gorski, City of Olmsted Falls Council, Ward 1
Jeremy Zelwin, City of Solon Council, Ward 3
Sara Continenza, City of South Euclid Council, Ward 3

Cc: Senator Larry Obhof, President of the Senate
Senator Kenny Yuko, Minority Senate Leader
Representative Larry Householder, Speaker of the House
Representative Emilia Strong Sykes, Minority Leader of the House
House of Representatives Finance Committee
Senate Finance Committee
Cuyahoga County Delegates

⁵ <https://www.policymattersohio.org/research-policy/sustainable-communities/transit/how-ohio-funds-public-transit>

⁶ <https://patch.com/ohio/cleveland/17-acre-solar-panel-array-installed-brooklyn-ohio>