



COLUMBIANA COUNTY

Board of County Commissioners

Mike Halleck, President
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Tim Weigle

April 6, 2022

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and all members of the State and Local Government Committee.

I am Tim Weigle, Columbiana County Commissioner, and I thank you for the opportunity to give my testimony in full support of HB 463.

Columbiana County is host to 3 Health Districts, those being The County Health District, Salem City Health District, and East Liverpool Health District. The city health departments are staffed, operated, and managed by the direct actions of the local elected officials that appoint their respective board members. The city health departments have responsibility for approximately 21% of Columbiana County's population of 102,500. The appointment of the City Health Boards is very much in line with HB 463 today and has much better accountability and transparency compared to the County Health District.

I've been a voting member on Columbiana County's advisory council for the last thirty-one years, twenty-three as a township trustee and nine as a Commissioner. I have chaired the District Advisory Council from 2013 through 2020 stepping away in 2021 and being re-elected chair in 2022.

Over the last eight years it has become apparent to me a new way of appointing Health Board members is much needed. Through this pandemic we are in, more than ever does the Health Board need to be active in the actions of the Health Commissioner and its role in keeping our residents safe and healthy.

Today's District Advisory Council is made up of elected officials from all the political subdivisions within the county the Health Department serves. Each year in March the council comes together to elect or re-elect a Health Board member. Over the past three years this election process has become somewhat contentious among council members as many through education have learned, they have a lot of dollars at stake through their vote and board appointment. As an example, in 2020 the Health Board approved a pay increase to the County Health Commissioner that elevated this employee to the highest payed in the county, more than the Prosecutor, County Engineer, and Municipal Court Judges. This was a Board that had been together over twenty years and a couple members even longer. To sum it up, the Health Commissioner's wages accounts for 38.5% of all the dollars the subdivisions pay into operating the Health Department.

With House Bill 463, a Board of Commissioners has direction to appoint board members from different sectors of Government that will come with experience in management, budgeting, and transparency that will ensure our dollars are being spent wisely and instill trust in the community that our health needs are being met with the utmost consideration. Today, our county office receives many complaints about the County Health Department and when we have to tell our constituents we don't directly manage the health department, they have a hard time understanding that.

I strongly feel this bill, with the amendments purposed, will provide a much better oversight of Health Department operations. This bill may even draw an interest from our City Health Departments to combine our resources for a savings and sharing of best practices. I also feel the relationships between our Emergency Management Agency, local First Responders, and Sheriff's office with the County Health Department will greatly improve.

Thank you, again Chair Wiggam for the privilege of your and the committees time to express my fullest support in passing House Bill 463. I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.

Respectfully,



Tim Weigle
Columbiana County Commissioner