



House Bill 463

A bill to eliminate the District Advisory Council and transfer authority to Boards of County Commissioners

Dear Chairman Wiggam and the members of the State and Local Government Committee,

Local health districts are one of the most regulated political subdivisions in the state, bound by numerous oversight bodies and audits. The system that was built overtime with an explicit purpose and continues to function well in the vast majority of communities.

Local health districts are regulated by the state Departments of Agriculture, Health, and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and audited by Auditor of State's Office. Locally they are bound to their elected County Treasurer, Prosecutor, and Auditor. And, lastly, their board's appointed by and monitored by their local District Advisory Committee, a body made of represents of the totality of political subdivisions within their jurisdiction whether village, city, township or county commissioners.

The District Advisory Committee, or DAC, exercises its authority by statute annually—receiving reports on the status of the district, typically including programmatic, financial, and disease reports, as well as appointing vacant positions on the Board of Health.

This shared responsibility among the elected officials provides assurance that the district's needs are represented and remain free of undo influence from a single constituent. Any member of the DAC may nominate and vote on proposed Board of Health members. Given that the primary source of funding for local public health in the state is inside millage, the DAC provides an important venue for the townships and villages to have their voices heard in the operations of each jurisdiction. It is important to note that while County Commissioners are part of the DAC and do vote or nominate Board members, they are not statutorily obligated to provide funding.

The appointment of Board of Health Members and the approval of local health jurisdictions are vested in local elected officials who represent the entire jurisdiction in a process that is both public and prescribed in law.

The proponent testimony for HB 463 spoke to issues unrelated to the DAC. Nor will HB 463 absolve health districts from following its statutory obligations as it relates to state issued health orders or the majority of programs which are derived from the Ohio Administrative Code (typically referred to as 'mandated programs' by local health districts). It may result in an undue and unnecessary transfer of this burden to another political subdivision, the Board of County Commissioners.

In conclusion, the statutory system for appointment of and oversight to the Board of Health continues to serve the best interest of local communities with numerous channels of oversight..

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason E. Orcena".

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Health Commissioner

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