



HB 140: Proponent Testimony to the House Ways & Means Committee, March 10th, 2021.

Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Sobecki, and members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Jeff Dillon, and I am the Ohio Legislative Director for Americans for Prosperity.

As one of the largest grassroots organizations in the nation, Americans for Prosperity (AFP) is driving long-term solutions to the country's biggest problems. Our organization, and its thousands of activists across Ohio, are dedicated to breaking internal and external barriers that stand in the way of people realizing their full potential. Removing these barriers, in whatever forms they take, helps move our society toward one of mutual benefit, where people succeed by helping others improve their lives and by transforming their communities. As such, I urge you to support House Bill 140, which would make changes to ballot language that would make it easier for voters to understand the impact of proposed tax changes.

The foremost barrier that House Bill 140 will eliminate, if enacted, is voter confusion. Representative Merrin ably explained during his sponsor testimony the various ways in which the current arcane millage system can present challenges to voters, and AFP - Ohio concurs with his assessment of the current problem. Government dollars are taxpayer dollars, and government works for the people, not the other way around. Being as clear and forthright as possible with voters before asking them to make a financial commitment is simply the fair and common-sense thing to do. AFP supported a previous iteration of this bill during the 133rd General Assembly, we and applaud Rep. Merrin's persistence in reviving this legislation.

HB 140 will increase transparency and fairness, especially the provision in the bill that requires that election notices and ballot language display the estimated total amount the levy would collect each year. Voters deserve to know why they're being asked to pay more, and what the total amount of a levy is expected to be so they can make an informed decision in the voting booth. Another improvement the bill would make is changing election notices and ballot language to express a levy's rate in terms of each \$100,000 of a county auditor's appraised property tax value. AFP - Ohio agrees with the bill's sponsor that these are terms more easily

understood by most voters, and that simplifying the numbers and expressing them in more relatable terms will provide Ohioans with a clearer picture on or before Election Day.

AFP-Ohio consistently advocates for stewardship of taxpayer dollars, and that stewardship begins with when and how local governments ask their constituents for those tax dollars. Given the common-sense nature of this legislation, we respectfully ask for your favorable and expedient consideration of HB 140.

Thank you, Chairman Merrin, for the opportunity to testify this morning. I'm happy to do my best to answer any questions the committee may have at this time.

Americans for Prosperity (AFP) exists to recruit, educate, and mobilize citizens in support of the policies and goals of a free society at the local, state, and federal level, helping every American live their dream – especially the least fortunate. AFP has thousands of activists across the nation, a local infrastructure that includes 36 state chapters, and has received financial support from more than 100,000 Americans in all 50 states. For more information, visit www.AmericansForProsperity.org.