



Safe Children, Stable Families, Supportive Communities

March 23, 2021

Opponent Testimony HB140

House Ways and Means Committee

Mary D. Wachtel, Director of Public Policy

Public Children Services Association of Ohio

37 W. Broad Street, Suite 1100

Columbus, OH 43215

614.224.5802

[mary@pcsao.org](mailto:mary@pcsao.org)

Chair Merrin, Vice-Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Sobecki, and Members of the Committee, this written testimony is on behalf of the Trustees and members of the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). PCSAO is a membership-driven association of Ohio's county public children services agencies (PCSAs) that advocates for and promotes children services program excellence and sound public policy for safe children, stable families, and supportive communities.

We are writing to share our opposition to House Bill 140, the Ballot Uniformity and Transparency Act for Property Tax Levies. Ohio's children services system is heavily reliant on local funding; in SFY2018, nearly half of the system was funded by local dollars.<sup>i</sup> Currently, 53 PCSAs maintain local levies. It is within this context that we oppose HB140, as we did HB76 and Sub HB76 in the 133<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly.

While the intent of HB140 is to update antiquated ballot language, increase transparency, and provide uniformity, we believe the bill likely will create confusion and make levy ballot language less transparent. In addition, because the bill applies a "one-size-fits-all" approach to properties, regardless of classification, it could lead to legal challenges due to its misleading nature.

We welcome the opportunity to work with the sponsor to address these concerns and achieve the goal of this legislation. For example, the General Assembly could require the use of standard terminology that reflects tax valuation and rate differences amongst property classifications. This would ensure accuracy in ballot language and reduce confusion.

Voters should make informed decisions when considering levy requests. This bill would make that more difficult and open the door to possible legal challenges. For these reasons, PCSAO opposes HB140 as introduced and respectfully requests consideration of the suggested approach mentioned above.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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<sup>i</sup> PCSAO 14<sup>th</sup> Edition Factbook, 2019. Data provided by ODJFS, special data runs, received 11/19/2018 and 1/4/2019. Additional calculations by PCSAO.