



TOLEDO
LUCAS COUNTY
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

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Chair Merrin, Vice Chair Riedel, Ranking Member Sobecki, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony. On behalf of the Toledo Lucas County Public Library, I am providing testimony in opposition to House Bill (HB) 140.

As an organization dedicated to ensuring our community has access to information and the resources needed to interpret and evaluate the accuracy of information resources, we have a vested interest in any legislation to make information easier to understand. I believe HB 140 works in the opposite direction to confuse voters and obfuscate the information they need to make an informed decision.

The current ballot language describes the taxes that will be levied on behalf of the taxing entity. Still, the proposed legislation complicates an already technical process in more than one way:

- The proposed shift to the use of the “county auditor’s appraised value” is misleading. This term is defined as true value in money of real property only. This term—technically defined as the true value in money of real property—assumes all taxpayers are residential/agricultural property owners and does not acknowledge rollbacks and the recently expanded homestead exemption. Language that applies to only one type of voter is neither inclusive nor helpful to voters.
- The suggested use of “taxable value” is not the same as “appraised value” and presents further opportunities for confusion. Since taxable values are different for different property types, using “taxable value” instead of “appraised value” suggests a false equivalency that is not only not helpful for voters but also misleading.
- The proposed legislation’s requirement of the auditor’s estimate of annual collections to be included in the ballot language would be misleading and present the information as a static figure when it is anything but.
- The use of “\$100,000” is contradictory and inappropriate since many Ohio homes are valued at less than \$100,000.

When public libraries and other entities place property tax levies on the ballot, they educate the public with accurate information during their campaigns to help voters make informed decisions. They encourage voters to contact the auditor to calculate accurate estimates to decide how they intend to vote. This proposed legislation appears to be solving a problem that does not exist, and goes further to overcomplicate ballot language and confuse voters with inaccurate or otherwise misleading information.

Respectfully submitted,
Jason Kucsma