



**Ohio House Civil Justice Committee  
Opposition to a Proposed Amendment (AM1842) to House Bill 390  
April 30, 2024**

Chairman Hillyer, Vice Chairman Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and Members of the House Civil Justice Committee:

My name is David Mann, and I am the President & CEO of the Lucas County Land Bank in Toledo, Ohio, where I have served for the past 11 years. I am also a founding Board Member of the Ohio Land Bank Association and a licensed Ohio attorney with expertise in real property and tax law.

I am writing to urge your opposition to the amendment that would incorporate Representative Hillyer's House Bill 153 into House Bill 390.

This amendment has the stated goal of protecting Ohio property rights, but if passed, it will only protect the interests of slumlords, out-of-state speculators, and absentee owners, not the Ohio homeowners it was ostensibly designed for.

Out-of-state proponents of the amendment suggest that Ohio tax foreclosure law must be changed or property owners will lose their home equity in ways that have occurred in other states like Michigan and Minnesota.

Yet, Ohio's tax foreclosure laws are nothing like Michigan or Minnesota. Ohio is arguably the gold standard when it comes to protecting property rights. No property owner has lost their home equity in Ohio in the manner of these other states – not before land banks and certainly not after land banks.

This amendment seeks to upend a framework solely for tax-delinquent, **abandoned** property that has worked very well for Ohio counties and Ohio neighborhoods for more than a decade.

By eliminating the ability of a county to channel a property that no one is living in, which has no utility services, and may also be boarded up, blighted, and unsafe (i.e., **abandoned**), the amendment prioritizes speculators over the interests of neighbors who, through no fault of their own, are harmed by that abandoned property and seeking local solutions.

House Bill 375, sponsored by Representatives Patton and Demetriou, includes legislative language that will upgrade Ohio's tax foreclosure laws in ways that will be positive for neighborhoods. By passing House Bill 375, the House will be able to improve tax foreclosure law, protect property rights, and ensure that land banks can repurpose abandoned properties in the manner we were designed to achieve.

Because the right solution can already be found in House Bill 375, this amendment is neither the best way to address this balance of property interests in Ohio nor needed today.

We urge the Committee to reject this amendment and maintain House Bill 390 as it was presented by its sponsors.