



April 9, 2024

Before the Ohio House Government Oversight Committee  
Proponent Testimony House Bill 331

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the Ohio House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of House Bill 331 my name is Tony Long, General Counsel and Director of Energy & Environmental Policy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

As you may know, for 131 years, the Ohio Chamber has served as the state's leading business advocate, and we represent over 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans. As part of our mission, we seek to make Ohio the best place in the country for businesses to operate and grow. We want to thank the sponsors of this legislation, Representatives Matthews and Young for their work on HB 331.

While the vote to dissolve a village (the subject of this legislation) does not appear to be a business issue at first glance, the process in HB 331 is the first step in addressing Ohio's local complexity. That complexity includes over 4,000 taxing jurisdictions that operate in Ohio duplicating services and adding unnecessary costs for Ohioans. For small businesses attempting to navigate what jurisdictions they fall under is time consuming and adds cost to the bottom line.

HB 331 creates an automatic process for dissolution of a village under defined circumstances after each decennial audit conducted by a county budget commission. The commission would evaluate if a village provided (itself or via a contracted third-party) a majority of nine services defined in HB 331 and has had at least one candidate at each general election over the last ten years on the ballot for each village position. If both conditions are not met then the question of dissolving the village would be placed on the ballot at the next general election.

While HB 331 does not address the overarching need to reduce duplicative taxing jurisdictions it does allow Ohioans to decide if the 673 villages in Ohio are too many especially if they are not providing services to its residents. Ohio has a rich history of local jurisdictions and local control, but we finally have a mechanism that automatically allows voters to decide if a local government is not serving their needs. The Ohio Chamber urges this committee to favorable report HB 331 to the Rules Committee.

