



Westerville Public Library

Ohio House Ways and Means Committee House Bill 1 – Opposition Testimony

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Chairman Roemer, Vice Chair Merrin, Ranking Member Troy and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written opposition testimony on House Bill 1.

The Westerville Public Library (WPL) serves the City of Westerville, parts of Columbus, northeast Franklin County, and southern Delaware County. WPL is organized as a school district public library under Chapter 3375 of the Ohio Revised Code. WPL is proud to serve approximately **113,000 cardholders***.

For every **\$1.00*** spent by WPL, the total economic benefit provided to our community is **\$3.58**. (This amount was determined using the Ohio Library Council's ROI Calculator.)

House Bill 1 would significantly reform Ohio's state income and local property tax structures. In 2022, WPL received \$3,335,680* in Public Library Fund (PLF) receipts. This translated to **37% of WPL's operating revenue**. Estimated reductions of \$43 million to the PLF in FY 2024 would adversely impact significant WPL revenue streams.

In addition, HB 1 proposes to eliminate state payments to school districts and local governments for the 10 percent property tax rollback for qualifying Class 1 properties. WPL received \$526,072* from the 10 percent rollback, a total of **6% of WPL's operating revenue**.

Lastly, the complex implications of the property tax changes contemplated by HB 1 may have **widely varying** and **unexpected results**.

These reductions in revenue would result in immediate and lasting negative ramifications for WPL. Necessary **infrastructure repairs** would need to be postponed indefinitely, increasing **risk of damage to the facility**, and would likely result in **safety concerns** over time.

High-value and high-impact services such as **job and career coaching**, **homework help**, and **technology assistance** – which require significant staffing investments – would need to be significantly reduced or eliminated.

WPL asks that as the General Assembly debates tax reform that libraries be held harmless from any adverse fiscal impacts. An increase to the PLF percentage may be the easiest avenue to achieve this request.

Thank you for the opportunity to share feedback on how HB 1 would currently impact the Westerville Public Library. We hope this information is helpful to lawmakers as discussions continue. We thank the General Assembly for their longstanding support of public libraries in Ohio, and we look forward to continuing that partnership well into the future.

** Unless otherwise stated, all numerical data presented within this testimony refers to 2022.*