



OHIO HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
House Bill 187 – Proponent Testimony

Don Dixon
Butler County Commissioner

June 20, 2023

Good afternoon, Chairman Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee. My name is Don Dixon. I am a Butler County Commissioner; a position I have held since 2007. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to offer proponent testimony today on House Bill 187.

First, I would like to offer my thanks to the sponsors of the bill, Representative Thomas Hall and Representative Adam Bird, for introducing this legislation. This bill is urgently needed to address an immediate problem facing Butler County residents and others across the State who are presently in the same 2023 triennial cycle. Butler County is undergoing a three-year update to its property tax values. In total, 41 counties, throughout the State of Ohio, are undertaking an update or reappraisal in 2023. These counties will experience a large, unvoted property tax increase unless action is taken by the Ohio General Assembly. The remainder of Ohio's counties will experience the same in a future year, again, unless something is done.

Several months ago, Butler County attempted to have a dialogue with the Tax Commissioner about ways to lessen this impact to our property owners, including the use of a three-year average of sale prices rather than the Tax Department's practice of relying on the most recent year. However, the Tax Commissioner dismissed the Butler County Commissioners and rejected an invitation to discuss her office's approach. Based on her calculation model, the State Tax Commissioner formally provided excessive property valuation increases to Butler County and the other like 41 counties. Butler County's 2023 triennial property valuation, as estimated by the Tax Commissioner, was an average 42 percent increase. If three-years of data are used instead, the valuation increase would be 25 percent for Butler County.

Although we recognize the tax reduction factors put in place by House Bill 920 MAY mitigate some of the impact of the valuation update, property owners will see a sizeable tax increase due to inside millage, which increases directly with valuation, and due to the fact that most Butler County school districts are at the 20 mill floor. In order to address this situation, a few months ago, the Butler County Commissioners convened our state legislative delegation along with other county elected officials to help identify a solution. House Bill 187, which requires the use of three years of sales data, is the result of this effort. The bill also requires the Tax Commissioner to consider economic conditions when recommending adjustments.

This legislation is a high priority for Butler County, and I urge the committee to favorably report the bill. If nothing is done, all counties will be affected either this year or at the next triennial cycle, depending on market conditions.

COMMISSIONER
Donald L. Dixon

COMMISSIONER
Cindy Carpenter

COMMISSIONER
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We should all recognize, however, that additional steps must be taken to develop a long-term solution. The Butler County Commissioners intend to reconvene our legislative delegation in the fall to discuss other policy changes. We believe that more autonomy must be given to a county budget commission, composed of multiple elected offices, to make decisions in the best interests of county taxpayers. The Department of Taxation should not be able to dictate valuation procedures to the county in the way it does now.

I look forward to a continuing dialogue with the General Assembly on this issue. Thank you for your time and consideration this afternoon. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.