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OHIO HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

House Bill 189 – Opponent Testimony (written only)

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Good afternoon Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee. My name is Jon Honeck and I am a Senior Policy Analyst with the County Commissioners Association of Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to share the views of CCAO on House Bill 189.

It has been said that Ohio's 88 counties are the branch offices of the state. Counties deliver vital services to Ohio's residents, most notably public safety and the administration of justice, which account for at least 60 percent of the typical county's budget. On the revenue side, the sales tax is the largest revenue source for the county general fund, as it is for the state general revenue fund. In order to preserve adequate funding for vital public services, CCAO opposes HB 189 and other legislation that diminishes the sales tax base and lowers revenue without any compensation to counties and transit authorities.

I would like to remind the committee that firearms and ammunition priced at \$500 or below are included in the expanded sales tax holiday that will take place August 2024, and in future years if revenues permit. CCAO did not oppose the expanded sales tax holiday during the HB 33 legislative process because of the \$750 million set aside to reimburse counties, local governments, and the state in 2024.

HB 189, on the other hand, creates a fiscal loss with no compensation to counties. The LSC Fiscal Note estimates annual sales tax revenue losses to counties and transit authorities between \$5.9 and \$9.8 million. An additional smaller loss would occur through a reduction in Local Government Fund distributions.

This legislation will remove funds that are needed to support the criminal justice system and other critical functions of county government. For this reason, CCAO is opposed to HB 189, and we urge the committee not to report this legislation. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify.



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