



County Auditors' Association of Ohio

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Ohio House Ways and Means Committee

Tuesday December 5th, 2023

House Bill 274

The County Auditors Association of Ohio (CAAO) has been a long-time proponent of protecting our most vulnerable citizens, and HB274 is a large step in the right direction to protect individuals on a fixed income.

The CAAO is proud to support HB274.

For years, individuals receiving Homestead Relief have seen a declining benefit to their tax savings due to increasing property values. In HB33, (the Budget Bill,) the legislature has taken steps in the right direction by tying the exemption amount to an inflationary index. However, this index has not kept up with the rising costs of real estate, resulting in many seniors seeing tax increases from not only the increasing value, but also the reduction in Homestead Relief. HB274 will help offset some of these increases for those who qualify for Homestead Relief and have lived in their home for 20 or more years.

While the CAAO is happy with this step, we know there is more to be done. This includes:

- Indexing the expanded exemption amount for long-term homesteaders so they don't lose benefit as they did under previous law;
- Expanding eligibility for those earning more than the income eligibility amount; and
- Considering the impact increasing property taxes have on those individuals who do not qualify for homestead due to not meeting the age or disability requirements.

We believe the Property Tax Review and Reform Study Committee, (enacted in HB33,) should look at comprehensive changes to our tax system, including the provisions in HB274. However, the Committee should not limit its solutions to specific groups of people. We all know and recognize there is a property tax problem in Ohio, and comprehensive changes need to be made. The CAAO also knows that HB274 is a good first step to help ensure our senior population can afford to stay in their homes.