



Representative Beth Lear
House District 61

Representative Scott Wiggam
House District 77

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Daniels, Ranking Member Troy and members of the House Ways and Means Committee. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to testify on House Joint Resolution 6 – to “Save Ohio Homes”.

As we all know, over the course of the last few years, Ohioans have watched property taxes increase 30%, 40% and even more. Our offices received call after call from constituents who declared they were on the verge of losing their homes. It has been heartbreaking to hear from so many elderly and fixed-income Ohioans who told us they were going to have to sell their homes, the homes in which they raised children and grandchildren, or farms that had been in the family for generations, because they could no longer afford the taxes. House Joint Resolution 6 slow the growth of excessive property taxes. It is not a complete solution, but it is a tourniquet for Ohioans who are bleeding money which will hopefully allow them to remain in their homes while we work to resolve this *serious* property tax issue.

House Joint Resolution 6 would place an amendment on the ballot that would, if voters approve, cap property tax increases at 4 percent per year or the rate of inflation, whichever is lower. While we realize it is too late this GA to get the resolution passed and onto the ballot, the problem is so urgent Rep. Wiggam and I decided to go ahead and share our sponsor testimony even at this late date to call attention to an issue we MUST address first thing in the new year. This House must take action to defend homeowners like other states have, such as the Homeowners Protection Act of 1998 which Florida voters added to their Constitution. We are not under the illusion that this will pass in this current General Assembly, but the people of Ohio deserve to have their concerns aired publicly. We have a duty to our constituents to let them know we have not forgotten them.

Now my joint sponsor, Representative Wiggam, will fill in some of the details.

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Daniels, Ranking Member Troy and members of the House Ways and Means Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on House Joint Resolution 6.

This resolution accounts for all property improvements and allows for the full addition of any property tax increases that were passed in 2023 through 2024. It also makes corrections for properties that are currently under an abatement agreement. However, starting in 2025, property taxes, regardless of levy increases, cannot increase faster than inflation or 4%, whatever is less.

For example, a house situated on a parcel of land that has an appraised tax value of \$400,000 in tax year 2025. With the freeze, the homeowner's property tax payments were \$4,000 in 2023. In 2025, if inflation increases by 4% in 2024, the homeowner's taxes could not exceed $\$4,000 + 4\%$, or \$4,160. Now, assume that in 2025, the homeowner adds a new room addition onto the house. The county auditor adds this improvement to the tax list at a value of \$50,000, with additional taxes of \$500. In the absence of this improvement, the freeze would be set at \$4,160 in 2025; however, because of the improvement, the freeze threshold will increase to \$4,660 ($\$4,160 +$ the \$500 in taxes levied on the new addition). In 2026, assuming that inflation increased by another 3% in 2025, the new freeze threshold would equal $\$4,660 + 3\%$, or \$4,799.80.

As Representative Lear stated, the November election has already passed, meaning this resolution can not be placed on the ballot. Therefore the goal of this testimony is an attempt to influence the ongoing conversation in Columbus regarding Ohio's broken property tax system with the idea that there must be inflationary caps on the property tax payments so that Ohio homes don't become unaffordable because of the growing government tax burden. Both Florida and Colorado have instituted caps in property tax increases. My experience is that both the left and right agree that property taxes should not be the foundational basis on which government entities survive.

Thank you once again, and Representative Lear and I would be happy to answer any questions.