

Molly Martin
People's Budget Cleveland (PB CLE)
3402 Monroe Ave
Cleveland, OH 44113

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Dear Chairman Rulli and Ranking Member DeMora,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 158. My name is Molly Martin and I am a Cleveland resident who is 1 of 180 volunteers who collected signatures to put Issue 38 on the ballot for Cleveland residents to vote on November 7, 2023. I am also a member of the People's Budget Cleveland steering committee and played a role in drafting the legislation that Cleveland voters should have the opportunity to vote on this fall.

The process of participatory budgeting has been implemented by hundreds of cities in the U.S., and all projects selected by residents who participate in the process must be projects that benefit the public, comply with state laws around procurement and bargaining, and must pass through the city's Board of Control, a safeguard measure in the People's Budget process, which aims to increase civic engagement.

I do have a question for this committee: Would this bill interfere with local governments' legal ability to pass expenditures lower than the well-established \$50,000 limit?

If the philosophy of creating a limitation on government powers and for local municipalities to self-govern resonates, then please vote against SB 158 and let Cleveland voters decide on Issue 38 for themselves.

I fear that state interference in local issues is only going to further alienate people from the democratic process, and that democracy is best served when we trust the discretion of voters and of local governments to implement policies that address their unique needs and problems.

The timing of SB 158 is no mistake, and it was introduced to prevent the passage of Cleveland Issue 38. Please honor Cleveland's home rule right to self-govern and oppose Issue 158. I am happy answer any questions this committee has.

Sincerely,

Molly Martin
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