

87th House District
Crawford, Morrow, Wyandot
And parts of: Marion



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From the desk of:
Riordan McClain
State Representative

Chairwoman O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Demora and members of the Senate Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 93.

Last year, my office received a call from a constituent about an issue he was having with his local municipality. This constituent, who owns a rental property in district was working on finishing up his taxes when he noticed an unexpected addition to his property taxes. Come to find out, a tenant who had recently left on seemingly good terms, had not paid their last water and sewer bill. This lack of payment, unknown to him was now attached to his property tax total. Even though it was the tenant whose signature was affixed to the water and sewer service agreement, it was now my constituent's financial liability.

Currently in the Ohio Revised Code, this practice of charging the property owner for the delinquent payments of the tenant is allowed. House Bill 93 seeks to correct this longstanding practice by correcting the Ohio Revised Code by removing the option to place a property tax lien due to services not contracted by the owner. HB 93 accomplishes this by providing that the property owner is not charged in excess of the "termination amount," or the amount that, when unpaid, would result in the municipal services provider terminating that service. If the complaint is not resolved to the individual's satisfaction, they may appeal the matter to the local municipal court.

The existing process for property tax liens will remain a tool for municipal services for property owners that contract for services, while if it is structured that the tenant is responsible for utilities, then that arrangement is respected. Establishing a structure or liability of unpaid debts and an appeals process to better protect customers should lead to an improved transparent process for all Ohioans.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to answering your questions.