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Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 113

Before the House Local Government Committee

March 4, 2025

Chairwoman King, Vice Chair Kishman, Ranking Member Sims and members of the House Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 113.

Ohio's annexation law has not changed since 2001 and I believe that it is time for the general assembly to consider a change.

In my district in Clermont County, I believe that we have an example for why the law should be amended. A village in the central part of the county is annexing land right next to the airport. They are planning high density housing, and are going to place a CRA (Community Reinvestment Area) on the development. The affected township is opposed to this, the county commissioners have opposed it, the airport is opposed to this, and the affected school district is definitely opposed.

This bill seeks remedy through several changes including the following:

1. Allows the county commissioners to stop an annexation if they do not believe that it is in the best overall interest of the county.
2. Allows the local school district to stop a Community Reinvestment Area if they do not believe that they can adequately educate the new students without tax support for the next 15 years.
3. It requires that the municipality administrator and assistant administrator file a financial disclosure statement with the Ohio Ethics Commission.

Reasons why these changes should be made:

1. A village council member elected by a couple hundred voters should not be empowered to change the development future of the county over the objection of township trustees and county commissioners who are elected by 10s of thousands of voters.
2. Limiting annexation preserves rural control, tax base, zoning power, and decision making.
3. Even small boundary shifts can favor cities, leave townships scrambling, and hollow out rural economies.
4. Limiting annexation safeguards rural identity and heritage.

This bill is NOT about banning annexation... its about balance. I believe that you will hear testimony in committee from communities in Ohio that believe that annexation is not balanced.

Chairman Thomas and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important resolution. I am happy to answer your questions.