

Testimony of Mayor Jeff Gore  
City of Huber Heights, Ohio  
Before the House Local Government Committee  
June 11, 2025  
Re: Opposition to House Bill 113

Chair King, Vice Chair Kishman, Ranking Member Sims, and members of the Committee:

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Jeff Gore, and I proudly serve as the Mayor of Huber Heights, one of the fastest-growing communities and a key partner in the economic engine of the Miami Valley region.

I am here today to express my strong opposition to House Bill 113.

This legislation, as currently written, threatens to severely undermine the ability of municipalities like Huber Heights to plan for future growth, responsibly expand our boundaries, and meet the rising housing demand driven by statewide and regional job creation, particularly in connection with Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and Ohio's growing high-tech sectors.

Ohio's own Governor Mike DeWine and then Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted have spoken clearly: the economic boom we are experiencing will mean nothing if we don't have enough places for people to live. As Governor DeWine stated in his 2025 State of the State address, job growth is outpacing housing growth, and we cannot afford to fall behind.

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, located just minutes from Huber Heights, has nearly doubled in size over the past 20 years and now supports 38,000 employees. That growth doesn't stop at the fence line. It touches every corner of our community, from schools and roads to restaurants and retailers. Each new job at WPAFB supports up to five additional jobs in our regional economy.

To address these challenges the City of Huber Heights is a proud and active member of the Wright-Patterson Regional Council of Governments (WPRCOG). Established in 2020, WPRCOG brings together local jurisdictions, including Huber Heights, Dayton, Fairborn, Beavercreek, Riverside, **Beavercreek Township**, **Bath Township** and Greene County, to promote compatible development and activities that support the continued operations of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and Springfield Air National Guard Base. Our planning aligns with mission support goals, infrastructure coordination, and long-term community development that benefits not just our city—but our region and our state.

House Bill 113 also poses a direct threat to the fundamental property rights of landowners, rights that are firmly protected under both the Ohio Constitution and the United States

Constitution. By granting county commissioners broad and subjective authority to deny annexation petitions based on an undefined “general good,” the bill strips property owners of their ability to determine how their land is used, developed, or affiliated with municipal jurisdictions. This overreach undermines long-standing legal principles that safeguard private property owner rights.

After a property owner was denied the ability to utilize their land in Bethel Township, Miami County, they initiated a request for annexation into the City of Huber Heights. In July 2024, our City Council approved the annexation of nearly 300 acres to support the phased expansion of Carriage Trails II—an area expected to deliver approximately 1,500 homes over the next decade. Let me be clear: the City of Huber Heights was not actively seeking to annex this land. The property owner came to us only after being told “no” by the township. This project moved forward following significant public input, and in response to community concerns, we amended the proposed housing development to ensure a balanced and responsible development. Our goal has always been the same—to help meet the growing demand for quality housing for working families, military personnel, and new residents relocating to Ohio due to the unprecedented wave of economic investment and job creation across our state.

This bill would inject politics and subjectivity into a process that should be built on mutual agreement and sound planning. It would erode the authority of municipalities, disrupt economic development efforts, and limit our ability to provide needed housing at a time when the entire state is asking us to do just that.

The City of Huber Heights actively uses CRA agreements as a tool to promote targeted residential development in alignment with infrastructure investment, ensuring balanced growth and long-term economic stability. House Bill 113 expands school board veto authority over residential CRA abatements, even in cases where the abatements are modest or essential to making a development financially viable. This additional layer of approval introduces unnecessary uncertainty into the development process and could significantly deter investment, particularly in underserved or transitional areas where housing is most needed.

Furthermore, it adds confusion and legal uncertainty around school district territory, township services, and taxation, without offering clarity on how those systems would work moving forward. If passed, this bill would discourage investment, strain intergovernmental cooperation, and ultimately hurt the very families and workers Ohio is working so hard to attract.

In closing, I respectfully urge you to reconsider the approach taken in House Bill 113. As written, this bill fails to promote collaboration, disregards home rule, undermines property rights, and threatens the economic future that Ohio is actively working to build.

Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any questions.