



## **OHIO HOUSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE**

**June 11, 2025**

### **Opponent Testimony House Bill 113**

Chair King, Vice Chair Kishman, Ranking Member Sims, and members of the Ohio House Local Government Committee:

My name is Bevan Schneck, and I am the public affairs director at the Ohio Municipal League. On behalf of the Ohio Municipal League, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony regarding the league's position on House Bill 113, which proposes sweeping changes to Ohio's annexation laws and economic development mechanisms.

As a statewide association representing more than 730 of Ohio's cities and villages, we emphasize that the best decisions for a community are made at the local level by local decision-makers. We appreciate tools from the state that preserve this local flexibility—such as the 100% Type II annexation process and Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs)—which have long facilitated responsible growth, economic development, and service delivery.

Unfortunately, House Bill 113 represents a significant step backward.

Ohio's current annexation framework has functioned well for more than two decades thanks to carefully negotiated agreements between municipalities and townships. The fact that the law has not required major reform since 2001 speaks to its effectiveness. HB113 would upend that balance by imposing overly broad, restrictive, and top-down mandates on all communities—regardless of whether conflict actually exists.

The bill:

- Reduces the allowable size of expedited annexations from 500 to 200 acres;
- Increases the contiguity requirement from 5% to 20% of the territory perimeter;
- Requires that the “general good” be evaluated for expedited and municipal-initiated annexations, effectively injecting political discretion into what has been a fact-based and predictable process;
- Restricts appeal rights by replacing legal challenges with only a writ of mandamus;
- Extends the annexation timeline from 45 to 90 days, delaying projects;

- Mandates transfer of annexed territory to the annexing municipality's school district, creating administrative burdens and disrupting student and district stability.

These changes complicate collaboration, hinder economic development, and increase legal ambiguity. For example, the bill's vagueness about what constitutes sufficient "services" from a township could trigger taxation issues and service disputes. Moreover, the mandated school district transfers break with long-established boundaries and could generate significant local opposition.

The bill also expands school board veto power to residential CRAs, requiring school board approval even for modest residential abatements. This creates an unnecessary new layer of bureaucracy that may discourage new housing investment—at a time when housing access and affordability are already major challenges across Ohio.

Further, the bill requires municipalities to provide detailed service commitments and delivery timelines, which may not align with the flexible realities of infrastructure and growth planning. It also grants townships the ability to object if they find these plans unsatisfactory, further injecting uncertainty into an already challenging process.

This bill is presented as a response to isolated incidents where local governments have disagreed on development plans. However, statewide legislation should not be based on anecdotal evidence. Ohio communities vary widely in geography, needs, and intergovernmental relationships. House Bill 113 seeks to solve for the exception, not the rule, and does so at the expense of local autonomy and longstanding intergovernmental cooperation.

Municipalities, townships, and counties each have a role to play—but they must be empowered to work collaboratively through locally appropriate solutions. Instead of empowering local communities, HB113 imposes new constraints that erode municipal authority and create more room for conflict, not less.

The Ohio Municipal League urges this committee to reject House Bill 113. It disrupts a system that has supported balanced growth and development for decades, and it does so by undermining property rights, intergovernmental cooperation, and local authority. We welcome a conversation about improving collaboration—but HB113 is not the answer.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 113.