



# Mount Vernon

## City of Mount Vernon

40 Public Square  
Mount Vernon, OH 43050

Phone 740-393-9517  
Fax 740-397-6595

**Matthew T. Starr**  
Mayor

### City Council

**Bruce E. Hawkins**  
President

**Jay Mahan**  
First Ward

**John Ruckman**  
Second Ward

**Tammy Woods**  
Third Ward

**LeNan Hager**  
Fourth Ward

**Amber Keener**  
At Large

**Janis Seavolt**  
At Large

**Mel Severns**  
At Large

### Administration

**Matthew T. Starr**  
Mayor

**Tanner S. Salyers**  
Safety Service Director

**P. Robert Broeren**  
Law Director

**John Thatcher**  
Judge

**David Stuller**  
Treasurer

**Dan Brinkman**  
Auditor

**Todd Hill**  
Clerk of Council

**Maureen Hall**  
Assistant Clerk of Council

June 6, 2025

Chair Angela King  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 S. High St., 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

*Re: Opposition to House Bill 113 – Annexation Authority*

Dear Chair King, Vice Chair Kishman and members of the Local Government Committee:

I am writing to respectfully express my strong opposition to House Bill 113, recently introduced to revise Ohio's annexation process. As Mayor of Mount Vernon, a growing city committed to thoughtful development and regional collaboration, I am deeply concerned by the implications this bill poses to local autonomy, economic progress and the balance of governmental authority.

House Bill 113 would permit county commissioners to unilaterally block a proposed annexation if they determine it does not serve the "general good" of the county. This language is not only vague and subjective – it also invites political interpretation and obstructs the ability of municipalities and property owners to work together to guide their own future.

Currently, annexation in Ohio already involves a rigorous review process, with opportunities for input from landowners, residents, township trustees and county officials. The existing system balances multiple interests and ensures that development proceeds with accountability. HB 113, however, would insert a new layer of bureaucracy that disrupts that balance – potentially allowing county commissioners, who may represent areas miles from the affected properties, to override local agreements, municipal land-use planning and economic development strategies.

In communities like Mount Vernon, annexation is not about reckless expansion – it's a key tool to provide infrastructure, jobs and housing in a smart, sustainable way. This bill risks halting that progress and deterring developers from pursuing projects in partnership with cities, particularly in regions where county-municipal dynamics are strained.

Furthermore, HB 113 undermines home rule – a constitutional principle that ensures cities and villages can manage their own affairs. By centralizing this authority at the county level, the bill shifts decision-making away from those most directly affected and most accountable to local voters.

I urge you to reconsider the long-term consequences of this legislation on economic development, municipal self-determination and public-private investment partnerships across Ohio. I would welcome the opportunity to speak further about how communities like Mount Vernon are managing growth responsibly and how this bill would hinder – not help – that mission.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew T. Starr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Matthew" and last name "Starr" clearly legible, and "T." in the middle.

**Matthew Starr**

Mayor, City of Mount Vernon

[mtvmayor@mtvernonoh.gov](mailto:mtvmayor@mtvernonoh.gov)

(740) 393-9517