



**Ohio State Representative Beth Lear**

**61<sup>st</sup> Ohio House District**

**MEMORANDUM**

To: House Local Government Committee

From: State Representative Beth Lear

Re: Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 466

Chair King, Vice Chair Kishman, Ranking Member Sims, and members of the Local Government committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 466.

This bill is about **accountability, transparency, and respect for the taxpayer.**

Across Ohio, a growing number of subdivisions—such as park districts, senior centers, and other unelected or quasi-independent boards—can propose property tax levies that have the potential to increase taxes for Ohio families, seniors, farmers, and businesses. In many cases, these organizations that are proposing levies are **not directly elected by the voters**, yet they can initiate tax increases that show up on property tax bills.

This legislation restores a critical layer of **local, elected oversight.**

Under this bill, before the aforementioned organizations may place a property tax levy on the ballot, they must first obtain approval from the **elected body that created them or represents the affected taxpayers**, such as township trustees, county commissioners, or municipal legislative authorities.

Importantly, this bill **does not eliminate any existing taxing authority.** Instead, it ensures that **elected officials—who are directly accountable to the people—are part of the decision-making process before a tax increase is advanced.**

The bill applies this commonsense standard consistently across:

- Township and county park districts
- Certain joint and special-purpose subdivisions
- Library and health district levy processes
- Other qualifying entities where governing boards may not be elected

This approach reflects a simple principle: **if taxpayers are being asked to pay more for services, their elected representatives should be involved before a levy ever reaches the ballot** and have the right to reject it.

At a time when Ohioans are feeling the pressure of rising property taxes, inflation, and cost-of-living increases, this legislation provides an added safeguard—without reducing local control or voter choice.

In closing, this bill strengthens trust in local government, promotes responsible fiscal decision-making, and reinforces the role of elected officials as stewards of taxpayer dollars.

Thank you for your time and I'm happy to answer any questions the committee might have.