



OHIO NEWS MEDIA ASSOCIATION | 1335 DUBLIN ROAD, SUITE 216-B | COLUMBUS OH 43215
MONICA NIEPORTE, PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

February 2nd, 2026

The Honorable Thaddeus Claggett
Chairman, House Technology and Innovation Committee
Ohio Statehouse
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Support for House Bill 413 (Create Local Government Expenditure Database)

Dear Chairman Claggett and Members of the House Technology and Innovation Committee—

On behalf of the members of the Ohio News Media Association (ONMA), I am writing today to express our support for House Bill 413, which seeks to expand transparency and accountability for Ohio's local governments. I am grateful that Representatives Young and Peterson have introduced this important measure, and I appreciate the committee's attention to this legislation.

Over a decade ago, under then-State Treasurer Josh Mandel, Ohio launched a revolutionary new tool to give reporters, researchers, and citizens access to state spending data. The Ohio Checkbook has become an invaluable tool for journalists seeking to report on spending and related matters. Since its inception, the Ohio Checkbook has been codified in statute, expanded to include some local governments, and seen more expenditure data loaded into its user-friendly interface. Not only has the Ohio Checkbook been a useful tool for my members, but it has also alleviated the need for countless public records requests related to state government spending; this has saved staff time and taxpayer dollars.

As you know, HB 413 would require all local governments to report expenditure data to a new 'Local Government Expenditure Database' housed under the Treasurer of State. Currently, local governments can voluntarily upload data and, according to the bill sponsors, roughly 26% of Ohio's local bodies are contributing information. Unfortunately, this spending data is inconsistent and often not up to date. HB 413 would remedy this by ensuring all local governments upload spending and expenditure information in a timely manner. HB 413 also requires Ohio's five public pension systems to report data to the Ohio Checkbook; this is vital to ensure accurate reporting of those systems. Lastly, the bill mandates revenue data also be reported, which would allow reporters and voters alike to see the other side of the balance sheet for state and local entities.

As was the case with the original Ohio Checkbook, I am confident that HB 413 will not only strengthen transparency and accountability but will actually reduce public records requests and create more efficiency. These resources will be crucial tools for reporters, and I urge your quick passage of HB 413. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Monica Nieporte
President and Executive Director
Ohio News Media Association