

Opposition Testimony on HB 28

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Chairman Roemer, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, on behalf of the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities, thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 28.

Ohio's 88 county boards of DD support more than 107,000 people with developmental disabilities—and their family members—by funding, overseeing, and sometimes directly providing a lifetime of services that are essential to an individual's daily living needs, often from the time a person is born until the time they pass away.

Unlike other local entities, county boards do not receive inside millage, or “unvoted increases”, meaning every dollar raised by a county board of DD must be explicitly raised in the form of a term-limited, continuous or replacement levy. When the county board is the funder of DD services, either at 100% or matched with federal funds through the state-federal Medicaid partnership, these funds are raised by asking voters to approve renewal, replacement, and continuing property tax levies. As the only taxed entity in Ohio required by state law to provide matching funds for state Medicaid-funded programs, hundreds of millions of dollars are drawn down for DD services in this state.

Indeed, election data from the past two decades paints a compelling picture that Ohio voters understand what is being asked of them on Election Day—and they have voted accordingly. County board of DD levies have been resoundingly approved by voters over the years because they have demonstrated they are a trusted, responsible steward of local tax dollars. In fact, since 2005, county boards of DD have proposed a total of 68 replacement levies in some capacity. Of these, 63 (or 93%) have passed.

County boards fund a lifetime of services, many of which are mandated by the state of Ohio. All county boards provide services in line with the expectations (and funding limitations) put in place by their local communities, and we trust voters to determine the best way these services should be funded. County boards engage in extensive education campaigns so that voters understand the issue that is on the ballot and the implications it will have on their tax bill. They also are careful to inform voters of how these funds are used, which leads to their overwhelming approval.

OACB welcomes opportunities to discuss how we can achieve the sponsors' goals while ensuring county boards have the ability to raise the funds they need for services. However, we have significant concerns about the future of developmental disability services if county boards lose the option to replace their current levy amounts should HB 28 be enacted as drafted. For this reason, we are opposed to HB 28 in its current form. Thank you for your time and consideration.