

WRITTEN REMARKS IN ADVANCE OF TESTIMONY ON H.B 28

Submitted By: Mayor Paul Adamson, City of New Franklin

Submitted To: Ohio House Ways and Means Committee

Submitted On: March 17, 2025

Greetings,

I write as an opponent to proposed H.B. 28 which would eliminate the authority of municipalities to place replacement property tax levies on local ballots. Although I respect the good intentions of the Bill, I believe the result would do more harm than good. The potential impact on our city illustrates this point.

We are a city of 25 sq. miles with 14,000 residents. We have a \$12M budget, \$3M of which is needed to staff and operate our two fire stations. Our current five-year levy (which expires this year) brings in a little over \$2M. Since we opened our second station on the west side of town, we are now subsidizing the Fire budget from our General Fund, which is problematic for a city with limited revenue sources. We plan to place a replacement levy on the November ballot. If successful this would generate an additional \$1M, for a total of \$3M, thus relieving the strain on our General Fund. The average cost for our residents would be approximately an additional \$15 per month.

Absent the ability to present the replacement levy we would need to place a new levy request. This is where I fear confusion. I have lived here for over 50 years and served in government here for over 25 years. Folks in New Franklin (and around the state I believe) are familiar with replacement levies. We present them clearly as not a new tax, but with accurate estimates of the estimated monthly increase for homeowners. This is done through newspaper ads, website notices and direct mailers. In this age of immediate access to news and opinions on Facebook and elsewhere, the word gets out and the public gets notified. Citizens are well acquainted with this process.

A new levy presents an altogether different challenge. Will folks understand one levy is expiring and the new one is taking its place, or will they simply vote against it as “yet another new tax?” New levies failed last year at a rate of 51% while replacement levies passed at a rate of 75%. Cities like ours can’t afford to wait for a learning curve on this new process. In these turbulent times we suggest there is no need for a change now. The current system is working well. People understand it, are comfortable with it, and can cast their votes intelligently and accordingly.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul F. Adamson, Mayor