

**House Ways and Means Committee
Proponent Testimony
House Bill 129
May 7, 2025**

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on behalf of Ohio REALTORS®.

Formed in 1910, Ohio REALTORS® is the state's largest professional trade association with approximately 35,000 members representing both residential and commercial practitioners, as well as auctioneers and appraisers.

Across the state, far too many homeowners are facing unsustainable property tax increases that are driven by rising property valuations. Many families – especially those on fixed incomes – are struggling to keep up with these growing tax bills, and we have seen more and more homeowners at risk of financial hardship or even displacement from their homes. This burden is exacerbated by Ohio's property tax system, particularly the impact of the 20-mill floor and exemptions from House Bill (HB) 920's tax reduction factors, which have allowed for unvoted increases in property taxes.

Currently, approximately 80% of Ohio's 611 school districts are at, or approaching, the 20-mill floor, meaning that they are no longer subject to HB 920 tax reduction factors. As a result, these school districts benefit from unrestrained property tax growth as home values rise, tightening the financial strain on homeowners and making it increasingly difficult for them to stay in their homes. In addition to this, a majority of school districts on the 20-mill floor have passed emergency or substitute levies or have levied an income tax to generate additional revenues – revenues that are not counted towards the 20-mill floor. This further amplifies the tax burden on property owners, and stresses the urgent need for reforms that ensure homeowners are not subjected to unchecked and unvoted tax increases.

HB 129 is an important solution because it would include emergency, substitute, and income tax levies in the calculation of the 20-mill floor, effectively increasing a school district's recognized millage. As a result, HB 920 protections would apply to those school districts no longer on the 20-mill floor to help prevent unrestrained growth on property taxes and provide much-needed relief for homeowners. This will ultimately bring more accountability to how school districts manage their property tax revenue and millage and will protect against spikes in unvoted property taxes.

Additionally, HB 129 would prevent school districts from moving portions of their inside millage to cause unvoted tax increases due to allocation changes. Under current law, school boards are

able to reallocate or change the purpose of certain unvoted millage in ways that can result in higher property taxes – and they can do so with no notice to the public. This legislation addresses this by requiring public hearings before any such changes that would raise taxes can be made, giving homeowners a chance to be informed and the opportunity to respond.

HB 129 seeks to bring balance and transparency to Ohio's property tax system, helping homeowners remain in their homes. We encourage a yes vote and thank the sponsors for bringing this bill forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Williams".

Scott Williams
Chief Executive Officer
Ohio REALTORS®