

House Committees
Public Insurance and Pensions, Ranking
Member
Education Committee
Energy Committee
Local Government Committee
Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review



Contact Information
77 S. High Street Columbus, OH 43215
<https://ohiohouse.gov/members/sean-p-brennan>
Rep14@ohiohouse.gov
614-466-3485

Representative Sean Patrick Brennan 14th House District

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on HB 143.

Like many Ohioans, we are very concerned about rising property taxes in Ohio and the burden it's placing on our families, especially those on fixed incomes. Like many other counties, Cuyahoga County underwent a reappraisal in 2024, and upon receiving their valuations, dozens of folks in my district contacted my office fearing that they would not be able to afford their property tax bills.

It is an honor to join my colleague Representative Mathews on this bill that will strengthen Ohio's homestead exemption by increasing it to \$56,000 (up from the current \$28,000) for homeowners who have lived in their primary residence for at least 20 years.

This policy is about fairness, stability, and keeping promises to the people who have invested decades of their lives—and livelihoods—into our communities. Over time, as property valuations increase, the value of the relief provided by the homestead exemption has become far less valuable for homeowners since it represents an annually diminishing percentage of their total property valuation. Even those who qualify for the reduction still are at risk of losing their homes.

Ohioans who have lived in their homes for 20, 30, even 40 years are often retirees, fixed-income households, or working families who helped build our neighborhoods long before property values started rising. But rising values mean rising property taxes—even if their income hasn't risen at all. In some parts of Ohio, including Parma, Parma Heights, and Cleveland, long-time residents are now

struggling to afford to stay in their own homes. These are folks who have literally paid their dues to their community and, now, many find themselves house rich and cash poor. No person should have to face a decision to pay their property tax bill at the expense of a meal, their utilities, or their medication.

Enhancing the homestead exemption for these homeowners provides targeted relief. It acknowledges their long-term investment and community ties, while helping ensure that aging Ohioans aren't forced out of their homes simply because of rising assessments.

Raising the exemption to \$56,000 brings the benefit more in line with today's home values and tax pressures. It's not a handout—it's a way to preserve housing stability for those who need it most and have earned it through long-term residency.

Now, some will ask: Doesn't this just shift the tax burden to other residents?

That's a fair concern. But let's put it in context.

First, this is a targeted expansion. It applies only to those with 20 years or more in the same home. That's a relatively small share of the population, which means the fiscal impact will be modest and manageable. Of course, I certainly favor providing further property tax relief and I welcome and will support other common-sense proposals.

Further, stability benefits everyone. When long-term residents stay in their homes, communities avoid costly disruptions: foreclosures, displacement, and a loss of neighborhood cohesion. Local governments avoid having to ramp up social services that often accompany housing instability.

Third, local governments, including school districts, will still receive reimbursement from the state for the homestead exemption, as the proposal requires that local revenue streams remain whole.

Finally, the moral and economic cost of not acting—of allowing seniors and fixed-income families to be taxed out of their homes—is greater than the relatively minor adjustments required to make this proposal work.

In short, enhancing the homestead exemption to \$56,000 for long-term Ohio homeowners is a smart, fair, and compassionate step. It ensures that we honor those who've built our communities, and helps Ohio remain a state where people of all ages can afford to live with dignity and security.

Let's keep our promise to the people who stayed, who built, who believed in our neighborhoods—often before anyone else did- and who just want to age in place in the home and neighborhood that they know and love.

Thank you Mr. Chairman – we welcome any questions from the committee.

