

# WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 6/16/2025

Name: Benjamin Young

Are you representing: Yourself ☒ Organization ☒

Organization (If Applicable): City of North Canton, Ohio

Position/Title: Deputy Director of Administration

Address: 145 N Main St.

City: North Canton State: OH Zip: 44720

Best Contact Telephone: 330-415-6461 Email: byoung@northcantonohio.gov

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes ☒ No ☐

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HB 335

Specific Issue: Inside Millage for Municipalities

Are you testifying as a: Proponent ☐ Opponent ☒ Interested Party ☐

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes ☐ No ☒

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? 10 Minutes

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

See attached sheet.

*Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.*



## **CITY OF NORTH CANTON**

**BENJAMIN YOUNG, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION**

330-499-8223 Ext. 1003

[byoung@northcantonohio.gov](mailto:byoung@northcantonohio.gov)

June 16, 2025

Ohio House Ways and Means Committee

Re: Proposed HB 335, Property Tax Relief Now Act

Dear 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 on HB 335. My name is Benjamin Young, and I serve as the Deputy Director of Administration for the City of North Canton in Stark County. I am here to express our city's serious concerns regarding House Bill 335 as currently proposed and its impacts on our budget and services.

While we understand and appreciate the General Assembly's desire to address rising property tax burdens across Ohio, HB 335, as currently drafted, would have significant and immediate negative consequences for municipalities like North Canton. We urge the committee to reconsider the bill's approach and to work collaboratively with local governments to find balanced solutions.

### **Impact on North Canton**

North Canton has taken proactive steps to move away from property taxes and stabilize our revenue structure, as Vice Chair Thomas stated he wants in his announcement. With the passage of local Issue 4 this May, we transitioned key services, fire, EMS, and roads, from property tax funding to income tax funding. This was a strategic move to ensure long-term sustainability and reduce reliance on property taxes.

However, even after this transition, the City still relies on inside millage, which is nearly 10% of our general fund. The elimination of inside millage alone would result in a \$1.6 million annual shortfall, forcing us to consider drastic measures such as reducing police staffing, eliminating public safety programs like school crossing guards, and outsourcing the City's dispatch center, which just last year, residents vocally told the City to preserve.

In the announcement of HB 335, Vice Chair Thomas talked about the importance of local government efficiency and of diversifying revenue. While I can agree with these ideas, North Canton is a perfect example of why those things aren't always what local communities want, another focus of Vice Chair Thomas's Announcement. It took North Canton 20 years to pass an income tax increase before voters approved it, and the City has made at least four attempts to join a regional dispatch center, but every time, voters speak loudly and say they prefer a local center.

North Canton City Hall  
145 North Main Street  
North Canton, Ohio 44720  
[northcantonohio.gov](http://northcantonohio.gov)





### **Concerns with HB 335**

HB 335 would not only eliminate this critical revenue stream but also empower unelected county budget commissions to reduce levies based on carryover balances. This is particularly troubling for North Canton, where our bond rating was recently downgraded due to insufficient reserves. The bill places us in a no-win situation: maintain prudent reserves and risk state-imposed cuts, or spend down reserves and risk further credit downgrades and higher borrowing costs.

Moreover, the bill's timeline, taking effect January 1, 2026, leaves cities with little time to adapt. Even if we attempted to place a replacement levy on the November 2025 ballot, the window between potential passage of HB 335 and the filing deadline is extremely narrow. And we would be competing with numerous other local entities facing the same crisis.

### **A Call for Collaboration**

We echo the Ohio Municipal League's call for a more thoughtful, collaborative approach to property tax reform. Real reform should, most importantly, provide adequate time and mechanisms for local governments to adjust. However, it will also need to respect local decision making and autonomy, which has historically been underpinned by inside millage, and include viable replacement revenues, such as a higher income tax floor or expanded local authority.

North Canton is a resilient and forward-thinking community that is making many of the reforms discussed in the announcement statement of HB 335, but this change would derail all of those efforts. We are not opposed to reform, but we are opposed to sudden, sweeping changes that undermine our ability to serve our residents effectively.

On behalf of the City of North Canton, I respectfully urge this committee to reject HB 335 in its current form. Let us work together to craft solutions that provide relief to taxpayers without dismantling the financial foundations of local government. I would be happy to provide input and ideas

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions, testify in person, or provide additional information.

Best Regards,

***Benjamin Young***

Deputy Director of Administration