



**City of Mount Vernon**

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**Matthew T. Starr**  
Mayor

**City Council**

**Bruce E. Hawkins**  
President

**Jay Mahan**  
First Ward

**John Ruckman**  
Second Ward

**Tammy Woods**  
Third Ward

**LeNan Hager**  
Fourth Ward

**Amber Keener**  
At Large

**Janis Seavolt**  
At Large

**Mel Severns**  
At Large

**Administration**

**Matthew T. Starr**  
Mayor

**Tanner S. Salyers**  
Safety Service Director

**P. Robert Broeren**  
Law Director

**John Thatcher**  
Judge

**David Stuller**  
Treasurer

**Dan Brinkman**  
Auditor

**Todd Hill**  
Clerk of Council

**Maureen Hall**  
Assistant Clerk of Council

June 16, 2025

Chair William Roemer  
House Ways and Means Committee  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Troy, and Members of the Committee:

I am Matthew Starr, Mayor of Mount Vernon, Ohio, in Knox County. I am here to express our strong opposition to House Bill 335, the "Property Tax Relief Now Act." While we acknowledge the intent to alleviate property tax burdens, we believe this bill undermines local governance and threatens essential municipal services.

A primary concern is the proposed elimination of unvoted inside millage, which would impact the City of Mount Vernon and other communities around Ohio. This revenue source has been vital for funding critical services such as:

- Police and Fire protection
- Street maintenance and snow removal
- Parks and recreation
- Contributions to the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund (OP&F)

For Mount Vernon, the loss of inside millage would result in a reduction of approximately \$1,300,000. Projections of up to \$2,600,000 in revenues due to new development would also be lost. This shortfall would force us to either seek new voter-approved taxes or make significant cuts to services, both of which are challenging and disruptive.

The bill also grants County Budget Commissions the authority to review and potentially reduce local property tax rates and expenditures, even overriding voter-approved levies. These unelected bodies should not have the power to alter local budgets, which are traditionally managed by locally elected officials accountable to their communities.

HB 335 does not provide a clear mechanism to replace the revenue lost from eliminating inside millage. This omission places an undue burden on municipalities, especially those like Mount Vernon with limited alternative revenue sources.

If the General Assembly seeks comprehensive property tax reform, we urge a collaborative approach that:

- Respects local decision-making
- Preserves voter-approved revenue streams
- Provides replacement revenues where existing ones are removed

On behalf of the City of Mount Vernon, I respectfully urge this committee to reject HB 335. Property tax relief should not come at the expense of local services and governance. Instead, let us work together to find balanced, sustainable solutions that benefit taxpayers without compromising the capacity of local governments to serve their communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am available to answer any questions or provide further information upon request.

Sincerely,



Matthew T. Starr, *D.B.A.*  
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