

June 17, 2025

Merisa K. Bowers
President & Member At-Large
City Council

House Ways and Means Committee
Attn: Chairman Bill Roemer
Vice Chairman David Thomas
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High Street, 11th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

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RE: Written Testimony Opposing House Bill 309 and House Bill 335

Dear Chairman Roemer, Vice Chair Thomas, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the City of Gahanna, I respectfully submit the attached Joint Proclamation and Resolution (RES-0030-2025) adopted by Gahanna City Council and proclaimed by Mayor Laurie Jadwin on June 16, 2025, expressing our strong opposition to House Bill 309 and House Bill 335.

These bills would eliminate or severely restrict the use of *inside millage*, a constitutionally protected and fiscally responsible funding tool that cities across Ohio including Gahanna have relied on for nearly a century. Stable, reliable property tax allows local governments to maintain essential services and fund long-term infrastructure needs without seeking tax increases on residents.

If passed, the legislation would result in serious consequences for our city and community, including:

- **An annual revenue loss of approximately \$3.6 million**, directly jeopardizing Gahanna's ability to maintain police, infrastructure, and pension obligations without resorting to new tax levies.
- **Increased borrowing costs** due to potential credit rating downgrades, as stable inside millage revenue is a key factor in municipal creditworthiness.
- **Reduced financial flexibility**, threatening Gahanna's ability to respond to emergencies, economic shifts, or capital needs without immediate tax increases or service cuts.
- **Diminished return for taxpayers**—the City's inside millage represents only around 1.5% of the total millage assessed across Gahanna's taxing districts. Eliminating it would have minimal impact on individual property tax bills while threatening higher costs on local services.
- **Loss of proven fiscal tools**—inside millage, coupled with fiscally responsible practices, helped the City of Gahanna contribute \$10 million in cash in 2023 to fund a new municipal complex, including a 21st-century police department with upgraded training, processing, and officer wellness space, reducing the need to borrow and saving taxpayer dollars.

These proposals, while framed as property tax relief, would instead destabilize local government operations and impair the ability of cities and school districts to plan responsibly. We respectfully urge the General Assembly to reject HB 309 and HB 335 and to preserve local authority over inside millage as a vital financial tool.

Thank you for your consideration. Please include the attached Joint Resolution & Proclamation in the hearing record.

Very truly yours,



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cc:
State Representative Beryl Brown Piccolantonio, District 4
State Senator Beth Liston, District 16
Ohio Municipal League