

# STOW-MUNROE FALLS CITY SCHOOLS

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STOW, OH 44224

## House Ways and Means House Bill 335

Stow-Munroe Falls City School District, Summit County  
Patrick Goclano, Treasurer/CFO

**October 15, 2025**

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee — thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 335. My name is Patrick Goclano, and I am the Treasurer/CFO of the Stow-Munroe Falls City School District in Summit and Portage Counties.

### **Local Stability at the Heart of Ohio's Funding System**

Ohio's school funding framework depends on a careful balance between state support and locally generated revenue. Inside millage is not a luxury; it is the foundation that gives school districts a measure of predictability and control. It is the stable portion of our property-tax structure that does not require constant trips to the ballot and that allows communities to plan responsibly for the future.

House Bill 335 would upend that stability by restricting or eliminating this essential local revenue. While the intent of the bill — providing tax relief — is understandable, the practical result would be a shift of instability from households to classrooms. If enacted, this proposal would force districts to rely almost entirely on external sources of aid or new levies just to maintain today's services.

### **What's at Stake for Our Community**

Stow-Munroe Falls City Schools serves nearly 5,000 students and remains a district of choice in northeast Ohio. Our families expect academic rigor, strong arts and athletic programs, and safe, welcoming schools. They also expect us to spend every taxpayer dollar wisely — and we do. Our per-pupil spending is aligned with state averages, yet our performance consistently exceeds them.

The inside-millage structure allows us to meet obligations predictably — from classroom staffing to student support and safety — without overburdening voters. It is what enables us to sustain academic quality through economic cycles, inflation, and enrollment changes.

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## **The Consequences of Eliminating Inside Millage**

If House Bill 335 becomes law, the impact will not be theoretical. Districts will have to make immediate and visible adjustments:

- **Program Retraction:** Without stable local dollars, enrichment programs in fine arts, career-technical education, and extracurriculars would have to shrink. These are not extras; they are key to student engagement and workforce preparation.
- **Erosion of Support Systems:** Counselors, intervention specialists, and paraprofessionals who anchor student mental-health and academic recovery services could be reduced or eliminated.
- **Escalating Pay-to-Participate Costs:** Families would bear more direct expenses for activities, transportation, and even all-day kindergarten — costs that hit working families hardest.
- **Increased Election Fatigue:** Voters would face levy requests every few years simply to preserve current programming. This constant cycle undermines public trust and breeds confusion about why schools appear to “keep asking.”

## **The Broader Ripple Effect**

Removing or freezing inside millage would widen the gap between property-rich and property-poor communities. Districts with substantial industrial or commercial tax bases might absorb the change; others — including many mid-sized suburban districts like ours — would struggle to maintain parity.

It would also create long-term constitutional and policy concerns. Inside millage has anchored Ohio’s “20-mill floor” since the DeRolph decisions emphasized the need for both state and local partnership in funding education. Altering that framework destabilizes not just budgets, but the principle of shared responsibility between local taxpayers and the state.

## **Preserving Trust and Predictability**

Our community values two things above all: excellence and honesty. We promise our residents that when they support a levy, their investment will be managed prudently and transparently. They keep their end of that promise — and House Bill 335 would make it impossible for districts to keep ours.

By dismantling the base of predictable local funding, this bill would undermine years of careful fiscal planning and erode the confidence that allows communities to work cooperatively with their schools.

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**Conclusion**

Ohio's education system succeeds when there is predictability, partnership, and trust between the state and its local districts. Inside millage is one of the few mechanisms that embodies all three.

I urge this committee to consider approaches that protect homeowners without removing the steady framework that keeps schools solvent, accountable, and student-focused. Tax relief and educational stability are not mutually exclusive — but eliminating inside millage sacrifices one to claim the other.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be glad to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick Goclano  
Treasurer/CFO