

**House Ways and Means
House Bill 335**

**Mentor Exempted Village School District, Lake County
Bill Wade, 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 today on House Bill 335. My name is Bill Wade, and I serve as the Treasurer/CFO of the Mentor Exempted Village School District in Lake County, Ohio.

First, I want to acknowledge that rising property taxes are a real concern for families and businesses across our state. Like you, I believe we must pursue balanced solutions that provide meaningful taxpayer relief while preserving the financial stability that allows schools to deliver high-quality educational services.

House Bill 335 would limit local revenue growth from inside millage, applying a 3% annual cap. For a district like Mentor, this proposal carries significant consequences. Inside millage is one of the few revenue sources (we are not on the 20 mill floor) that grows modestly with property values over time. This natural growth is essential for keeping pace with inflation, rising labor costs, transportation, and special education needs without returning to the ballot for new levies more frequently.

Mentor currently has 4.8 mills of inside millage on a total valuation of approximately \$2.74 billion (TY 2024). Based on our most recent projections, our valuations are expected to grow by 0.38% in TY 2025, 0.38% in TY 2026, 12.89% in TY 2027 (reappraisal year), 0.29% in TY 2028, and 0.35% in TY 2029. Under current law, this would generate approximately \$1.9 million in additional inside millage revenue over the next five years, with the most significant increase occurring during the 2027 reappraisal.

However, if a 3% annual cap were applied as proposed in HB 335, Mentor would lose approximately \$4 million in inside millage revenue over that same period. The single largest impact would occur in 2027, when our inside millage revenue would normally grow by about \$1.7 million. Under the cap, that growth would be reduced to just \$398,000, a loss of roughly \$1.3 million in one year.

This is not “new money” for the district. It is the expected inflationary growth that allows us to sustain current levels of service — supporting 7,300 students across 13 schools — without immediately seeking new operating levies. Restricting this growth shifts even more responsibility away from the state and onto local communities already stretched by rising costs.

Over time, these caps compound. By TY 2029, the district would be receiving \$1.3 million less annually than under current law, and the cumulative loss over five years would total approximately \$4 million. For a district that operates efficiently with one of the lowest per-pupil

expenditures in Lake County, these are not trivial dollars. They represent staffing, programs, and services that support student learning and safety every day.

At a time when Ohio is emphasizing literacy, math achievement, workforce readiness, and career pathways, HB 335 would undermine the very financial foundation that makes these priorities possible.

I respectfully urge the committee to consider alternatives that provide targeted taxpayer relief without destabilizing local school funding, such as state-funded property tax credits or adjustments, rather than blunt local revenue caps that weaken schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I'd be happy to answer any questions. I can be reached via email at Wade@mentorschools.org or via phone at 440-974-5222.

Exhibit: Mentor EVSD - Inside Millage Revenue Projection (TY 2024-2029)

Tax Year	Uncapped	3% Cap	Difference
2025	\$13.22 M	\$13.22 M	\$0
2026	\$13.27 M	\$13.27 M	\$0
2027	\$14.99 M	\$13.67 M	-\$1.32 M
2028	\$15.03 M	\$13.71 M	-\$1.32 M
2029	\$15.08 M	\$13.76 M	-\$1.33 M
Total Loss			≈ \$4 million

