

June 5, 2025

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and the esteemed members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I'm a resident of Anderson Township in Hamilton County, writing to thank you for the local funds that have been restored in the Senate version of the budget and to ask that you fully restore the funding outlined for cannabis host communities as written in Issue 2 language when voters approved it at the ballot box.

I have never visited a dispensary, but I voted in favor of Issue 2 because Ohioans have the right to choose whether or not they want to shop at one.

I also voted for Issue 2 because I live in a township with limited revenue streams beyond property taxes, and the local host community fund offered a solution to part of that problem.. In my 21 years as an Anderson Township resident, I've watched the General Assembly further reduce our available revenue streams from the estate tax, commercial activity tax, and the public utility tax. Meanwhile, after allowing video gambling at local racetracks, the township was promised revenue from the Casino Operators Settlement Fund, only to have it diverted a few years later to the general revenue fund.

My fellow Anderson residents and leaders are forced to make difficult decisions about their finances, local businesses, and even the allocation of local resources because the General Assembly appears unwilling to make hard decisions on its own.

Elderly neighbors might now be "house rich," but that matters little when they pay bills on a fixed income. Eliminating statutory revenue for local governments, as this budget amendment does with the promised host community funds for cannabis, will lead to tax increases, not property tax relief, even with increases to the homestead and owner-occupied exemptions.

Do we fund emergency services, or do we make it too expensive for our current residents to live here? Do we fund our schools, or do we make cutbacks at a school district that operates successfully and efficiently?

Please fully restore this local revenue source to begin the process of restoring what the local township should be receiving in state and local government funds.

Sincerely,

Natalie Hastings

Anderson Township resident, mother of two, small business owner, and community advocate

