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Committees:

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AM. SUB. H.B. 335 Sponsor Testimony Before the Ohio Senate Local Government Committee on October 28, 2025

Chair O'Brien, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 335. Thank you, Chair O'Brien, for hearing this bill right away.

Ohio's property taxpayers are at a tipping point. For 5 years they have seen spikes in unvoted property taxes and have demanded reforms to the system. Because property taxes, the largest tax paid by Ohioans at roughly \$24 Billion, all stay at the local level and because we have already given local governments the tools to relieve the property owner, there has been a tug of war in a sense between the legislature and local governments over what is to be done and how to fix the problem.

The legislature has consistently said it is a local issue. The local governments have consistently said it is a state issue. This stalemate has led to gridlock and little action over the last 5 years and 5 decades. The taxpayer has still been left with spikes in unvoted taxes and local governments have still collected in these tax increases while bold policy change from Columbus has been unattainable. We cannot afford to continue this.

When property taxes spiked without a vote due to higher valuations, the local entities did not need to accept that windfall. But, most did. Now, looking back, many are saying that was wrong and are decreasing rates now. Counties are in fact leading the charge in this. We have almost 20% of counties decreasing tax rates, enacting the Piggyback Homestead or Owner Occupancy options we placed in the budget, or some combination of both to lower rates and prevent spikes in 2026. This is saving millions. I cannot thank the CCAO and many counties across Ohio enough for taking the lead.

But that isn't enough. We set the law of the land and we determine the policy which government follows for taxes. We must ensure that the spikes never happen again. With HB 186 we limit unvoted increases to schools on the 20 Mill Floor. With HB 335, we do the same for inside millage entities like counties, schools, village, cities, and townships. The estimated savings over the next three years is nearly \$700 Million and is largely focused in our more urban areas not impacted by the 20 Mill floor and which have higher values.

This bill also received a 11-1 vote out of Ways and Means Committee and 72 votes in the chamber. We accepted several Democrat amendments to make the bill better including protecting inside millage from being assessed by another entity if the local government did not collect and allowing for new construction growth to be treated the same as current law with HB 920.

The best time for this bill was June 2020. Legislation then would have prevented the current crisis that we now must solve. The second-best time is 2025 to say, never again.

I am happy to take questions and am grateful for the opportunity, Chair O'Brien.