



# OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**Liz Baumgartner, Director of Economic Development and Tax Policy**

**Ohio Chamber of Commerce**

***Proponent Testimony – House Bill 129***

***October 29, 2025***

Chair O’Brian, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Ohio Senate Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 129. My name is Liz Baumgartner, and I am the Director of Economic Development and Tax Policy for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

For 132 years, the Ohio Chamber has served as the state’s leading business advocate and represents over 8,000 companies that do business in Ohio. Our mission is to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness, and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans.

House Bill 129 works to address sharp increases in property taxes by including fixed-sum levies, such as existing emergency and substitute levies, in the calculation of a school district’s 20-mill floor and the 2-mill floor for JVSD, beginning in 2026. This change would help restore the effect of HB 920’s tax-reduction protections for districts that are no longer on the 20-mill floor, offering much-needed relief to taxpayers. It also authorizes districts to levy fixed-sum property taxes in limited circumstances, such as during fiscal distress or a declared emergency.

In recent years, Ohioans have faced mounting property taxes, presenting a growing financial challenge for many residents. Two aspects of Ohio’s property tax system that have contributed to the increases include the interaction of the 20-mill floor and the erosion of the House Bill 920’s tax reduction factors. Of Ohio’s 611 school districts, approximately 70% are already at the 20-mill floor. This means these districts no longer benefit from HB 920’s protections; allowing their property tax rates to rise with property values. Additionally, many of these school districts, already at the 20-mill floor, have also passed emergency and substitute taxes to generate more revenue. The revenue from these additional levies is not included in the calculation of the 20-mill floor, resulting in even higher growth in property taxes and creating a tax burden on Ohio property owners.

[The Ohio Tax Benchmarking Analysis](#) conducted by the Ohio Chamber Research Foundation and Ernst Young found that Ohio’s local tax rates exceed those of peer locations for over half of the industries analyzed, with property and local income taxes being key drivers. More specifically, the study found that property taxes in the locations in Ohio were 72% higher than those of the

peer locations analyzed across the county. High property taxes not only negatively impact current residents of Ohio, but also act as a disincentive for businesses looking to locate to our state.

In conclusion, House Bill 129 is a much-needed reform that will help restore the protections of HB 920 to districts that are no longer on the 20-mill floor and ensure property taxes in Ohio remain manageable for property owners. We thank the sponsors of this bill for introducing this legislation and the committee for your consideration.