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Senate Ways & Means Committee
SB 81 Sponsor Testimony
February 18, 2025

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Roegner, Ranking Member DeMora, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee – thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 81, which would effectively freeze property taxes for Ohio owner-occupants aged 65 and older who earn less than \$70,000 annually. I first introduced this legislation in 2003 as House Bill 270 of the 125th General Assembly.

Currently, there is a \$26,200 homestead exemption for seniors in Ohio, but the income limit of \$38,600 has proven impractical for most of our constituents. Cuyahoga County has the highest average effective tax rate in the state, yet it saw an average property valuation increase of 32% in 2024. In East Cleveland, where the median home value was just over \$57,000, property values increased by 67%, skyrocketing property tax obligations by an average of 62%, or \$546 annually. For senior citizens on fixed incomes, this is simply untenable.

I ask you to help me protect our seniors from excruciating increases in property taxes. Our seniors are not asking for increased exemptions; only fixed property taxes while they are living on fixed incomes. This is common-sense legislation that would have a truly meaningful impact on our constituents.

Chairman Blessing and the esteemed Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I would like to thank you again for this opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.