



FINANCE COMMITTEE

WITNESS FORM

Today's Date: June 5, 2015

Name: Bernie Quilter

Address: 700 Adams
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Telephone: 419-213-4405

Organization Representing: Ohio Council of County Officials (OCCO)

Testifying on bill number: HB 64

Testifying as: ___ Proponent
 ___ Opponent
 __X__ Interested Party

Are you a registered lobbyist? ___ YES __X__ NO

Are you submitting written testimony? __X__ YES ___ NO

Comments: See attached



OHIO COUNCIL OF COUNTY OFFICIALS

President	Vice-President	Secretary/Treasurer
J. Bernie Quilter Lucas Co. Clerk of Courts	Jerry R. McBride Clermont Co. CPC Judge	Scott C. Coleman Logan County Engineer



Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chairman Coley and Ranking Member Skindell, thank you for the opportunity to testify before all of you. My name is Bernie Quilter, I'm the Lucas County Clerk of Courts and President of the Ohio Council of County Officials (OCCO) and represent over 1300 elected county officials in the state of Ohio.

County elected officials, along with other elected officials, have not received a cost of living adjustment since 2008 and county boards of elections members have not received a cost of living adjustment since 2003.

Today, if you vote for an adjustment for county elected officials, we will not receive it until Jan 1, 2017 and one Commissioner and the Auditor would not receive it until Jan 1 of 2019, because we can not receive an adjustment in mid term. Therefore we would still go another year and a half before an adjustment could take effect. Other than the Judges who can receive their adjustment immediately the rest would have to wait, making it at least 8 to 12 years since any adjustment has been made.

We the OCCO would support the pay commission committee to take effect in 2019 or 2021, but because it will be over 8 years since an adjustment has been made, we are proposing the following for a short term fix. Therefore, allowing plenty of time for the constitutional change to be voted on by the public and more importantly, allowing the committee plenty of time to do research, studies and comparisons to develop a fair compensation package for all of us including all of you.

The proposal outlined below was developed by the Ohio Council of County Officials (OCCO). It has the unanimous support of all of the county official groups comprising OCCO, which include Judges, County Commissioners, Prosecuting Attorneys, Auditors, Treasurers, Clerks of Court, Sheriffs, Coroners, Engineers, and Recorders. It is also supported by the Ohio Township Association and the Ohio Association of Elections Officials.

- A traditional cost of living adjustment (COLA) capped at 3 percent and maintained on a permanent basis. For most county officials the COLA would

start in 2017 when their new terms begin; for Judges, the change would be immediate.

- For county elected officials other than judges, a reduction in the number of population pay classes of counties from eight to six. This would modernize the pay structure and provide a modest pay adjustment for county officials, most of whom would not realize any increase until 2017. The modest pay adjustment will help the smaller counties by bringing their local elected officials up at a higher percentage than the larger counties, thus closing the gap between small and large counties.
- In addition, the proposal would provide county boards of elections members a similar adjustment.

- For judges, a 5 percent pay increase in 2015-2018 along with implementation of the COLA.
- For Township Trustees and fiscal officers, a nominal one percent increase along with the implementation of the COLA.
- The cost impact of this proposal would be incremental because of the staggered nature of county elections and constitutional provisions regarding pay increases. As stated above Legislative action in the Budget Bill would result in pay adjustments for judges immediately. Pay adjustments for some township officials would occur in 2016. Increases for County Prosecutors, Treasurers, Clerks of Courts, Sheriffs, Coroners, Engineers, Recorders, and the other two County Commissioner spots, would not occur until 2017. While county auditors, one of the three county commissioner positions would not take effect until 2019.

Once again, please remember we still will go another year and a half until this proposal would take effect.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely



J. Bernie Quilter
Lucas County Clerk of Courts
OCCO President