



OHIO TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION

6500 Taylor Road, Ste. A

Blacklick, OH 43004

Phone: (614) 863-0045 Fax: (614) 863-9751

www.OhioTownships.org

HCR 9 – Township ARP Support Proponent Testimony May 18, 2021 House State and Local Government Committee

Good afternoon Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee. My name is Marisa Myers, and I am the Director of Governmental Affairs for the Ohio Township Association. On behalf of the Ohio Township Association (OTA), I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you as a proponent of House Concurrent Resolution 9, which expresses the General Assembly's support for township inclusion in American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding.

As you know, the American Rescue Plan is the most recent stimulus package passed by Congress to help mitigate effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. The bill was signed into law on March 11 and contained substantial funding for states and local governments.

For funding purposes, the ARP essentially split local governments into two groups: "metropolitan cities," or those over 50,000 in population, and "nonentitlement units of local government" (NEUs), or those under 50,000. The issue for townships came in the definition of NEUs. Between a version pending in the House and final passage of the bill, the definition of NEU was altered and left confusion as to the status of Ohio townships, as well as townships in several other states, under the bill.

The OTA, with support from Ohio's Congressional delegation, the National Association of Towns and Townships, and many state and local leaders, has sought clarity from Treasury on whether townships will be deemed eligible for direct funding under the definitions of the bill.

Since the introduction of this resolution, U.S. Treasury has issued some guidance for state and local government funding under the ARP. On May 10, Treasury publicized some of the guidelines for this funding and a breakdown of allocations for the "metropolitan cities" category; there were three townships included on this list. However, Treasury did not release the breakdowns for NEUs – only the aggregate amount for this category by state. Their website notes that "Treasury expects to provide further guidance on distributions to non-entitlement units in the coming days."

While the OTA believes it is a positive indication that three of Ohio's townships have been included on the metropolitan cities list, we cannot definitively say where the rest of Ohio's 1,308 townships stand without further guidance from Treasury.

Having the majority of townships excluded from this funding would be a huge detriment to these communities. Townships across Ohio represent approximately 4 million Ohioans and provide essential services, such as fire, police, EMS, waste removal, and others. It is crucial that townships are able to access these funds, just like other units of local government in Ohio.

The Ohio Township Association supports HCR 9 and we strongly encourage your support as well. Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you this afternoon, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you or committee members may have.