



CITY OF LANCASTER, OHIO
OFFICE OF THE LAW DIRECTOR & CITY PROSECUTOR
STEPHANIE L. HALL

Chairman Merrin
Ohio House Ways and Means Committee

Chairman Merrin:

As the Law Director & City Prosecutor for the City of Lancaster, I would like to share with you some points of concern that cause me to oppose HB 519.

HB 519 has two parts that are deeply concerning. The first part of the bill eliminates the ability of municipalities to apply a late penalty and fees on municipal taxpayers for not filing a required tax return if the taxpayer does not have a tax balance. My municipality must be able to have an enforcement mechanism associated with all aspects of compliance sufficient to ensure accurate and fair administration of the municipal income tax, thus protecting all our taxpayers.

Without a monetary penalty, municipalities like mine will not be able to enforce our communities' filing requirements equally to all taxpayers.

In many circumstances where a taxpayer is alerted of a non-filing situation, the taxpayer contacts our tax administrator to explain the situation and if possible, the administrator will waive the penalties and late fee, especially if the taxpayer is not a habitual late filer. Lancaster values the services we provide our taxpaying customers, and our tax office works with our residents daily on a wide range of issues to resolve questions or challenges such as these.

The second part of HB 519 would prohibit Lancaster's municipal tax administrator from sending notices to a resident if a filing has not been received prior to the October extension due date. Our community does not receive communication from the IRS that one of our taxpayers has received a federal extension which automatically extends the filing date for their municipal tax filing, so if an extension has been granted, we are unaware of it. We send the reminders and notices to alert our resident that there is an outstanding obligation to make the filing or to follow up with their preparer if they believe a filing has already been made so that penalties and fees can be avoided and the compliance issue resolved. We believe stripping our city of this basic communication tool frustrates effective customer service and that this important communication between the taxing entity and taxpayer should be preserved.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Ohio House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for considering these concerns.

Respectfully,

Stephanie L. Hall,
Law Director & City Prosecutor