



*Stronger Counties. Stronger Ohio.*

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Cheryl Subler, Executive Director

## Ohio Senate Finance Committee

### Proponent Testimony – Substitute House Bill 110

#### Tim Bubb, Licking County Commissioner

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Tim Bubb; I serve as a Licking County Commissioner and as President of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO).

CCAO's primary legislative goal for this budget is to have the state fully reimburse counties for their costs incurred in fulfilling the state's constitutional obligation to provide counsel to indigent defendants. The DeWine Administration and General Assembly have made great progress in this area in recent years. CCAO was pleased to see that momentum continue in the governor's executive budget proposal, which is projected to provide indigent defense reimbursement rates of 96 and 94 percent in Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023, respectively. Furthermore, the Ohio House, in its version of the operating budget, provided an additional \$8.3 million and \$12.3 million across both fiscal years to achieve an estimated 100 percent reimbursement rate. CCAO is deeply appreciative of these investments and we strongly encourage the Senate to retain them.

There are several provisions impacting county justice and public safety where CCAO is seeking modifications. CCAO supports the continuation of a voluntary T-CAP program and asks that the provision that would make this program mandatory be removed. We believe that making this or any other program a mandatory obligation is contrary to the concept of strengthening the state-county partnership and impacts the discretionary function of a county government to act in the best interests of its constituents. And, although grant funding is being provided, the funding level is insufficient to cover the costs associated with the program resulting in an unfunded mandate upon the counties.

We remain, as we have from the inception of this program, particularly concerned about the practical impossibility to implement the program in some counties due to insufficient, and in many situations unobtainable, infrastructure available to provide the rehabilitation, treatment and security services required for the program. These needs include counseling, probation and administrative staff, community housing and jail space and equipment to effectively monitor probation/sentence compliance.



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We also note the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction has indicated its preference that the program to be continued as provided for in the executive version of the budget.

Another important program for public safety personnel at the county level is MARCS radio subscriber fee offsets. MARCS radios are used by first responders across the state, including many county sheriff's offices. CCAO appreciates House-provided funding of \$1.5 million each fiscal year to help offset the subscriber fee that local governments pay for these radios. CCAO further supports an amendment to provide an additional \$1 million per fiscal year to maintain the \$10 per month local user fee and avoid further cost increases in equipping county public safety personnel.

The Psychotropic Drug Reimbursement Program under the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services reimburses counties for the cost of certain drugs that are dispensed to inmates of county jails in Ohio. These drugs can be expensive, and this program provides budgetary relief for county jails in meeting inmate mental health needs. A House-added amendment would restrict these funds to only existing programs. CCAO respectfully requests that this restriction be removed.

Rounding out public safety issues, CCAO supports the House's inclusion of language which would allow counties to access 0.5% of unused transit sales tax authority to fund county jail operations, subject to voter approval. Current statute provides this option for jail construction, and this provision would extend this same ability to fund jail operations. The ability to staff a county jail is equally as important as the ability to construct the facility, and this provision would provide counties an additional tool to do so.

The House-passed budget includes a provision that allows a board of county commissioners to decrease the size of their local ADAMHS board. CCAO supports this permissive ability to determine the composition of a local board and supports the majority of the appointment authority remaining at the local level. Amendment SC3052-1 would make several changes to this provision regarding the minimum size of the board, categorical appointments, and size of newly created boards. CCAO is supportive of these changes.

Finally, looking to children's services, CCAO supports the Public Children Services Association of Ohio's request for \$50 million per year to fund the many transformative policy changes including the State Kinship Support Program and the federal Family First Prevention Services Act. Counties will soon be implementing these new policies, which will place considerable strain on county children's services budgets. CCAO seeks partnership with the state to ensure the cost of these new programs do not outstrip available local resources.

Counties across Ohio appreciate a strong state-county partnership to build stronger counties for a stronger Ohio. Counties look forward to working with the Ohio Senate in furtherance of that partnership by crafting a strong state budget bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you have for me.