



County Auditors' Association of Ohio

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Ohio House Bill 255 County Auditors' Association of Ohio Greene County Auditor David Graham Tuesday, May 31, 2022

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 255. This bill is not only going to modernize our County Auditors' and County Treasurers' offices, but the potential savings that this bill creates would allow us to allocate money in other areas suffering from lack of funding.

As you all are aware, taxpayers are provided an individual notice that they owe taxes to their County Treasurer. They receive tax bills, they receive individualized letters and finally, under current law, their name is placed in the newspaper twice. Our relatively small proposal is to amend the final piece of this process and only place their name in the newspaper one time.

I am sure this sounds incredibly minor when compared to the important work this body has in front of it, but the impact of it is surprisingly large on many of our counties. Hamilton County could save \$32,850 dollars annually from this simple piece of legislation. Cuyahoga County accounted for 28% of all statewide delinquent property taxes in 2016. Cuyahoga County alone could save upwards of \$60,000 a year if House Bill 255 was successful in becoming law. In these strong economic times, we anticipate hundreds of thousands of dollars of savings to counties bottom line. During recessions, when delinquencies increase, this number will likely cross over a million dollars a year.

Not only are the savings this bill would generate relevant, but online publications might be more effective than paid advertisements in a local newspaper. In Greene County and many counties outside the urban cores, there is not one general newspaper in circulation that serves the entire population. This makes an online publication a more accessible option for many areas of Ohio.

To clarify, this legislation does not require a county to publish their delinquent tax lists online, but only offers this as a choice for the second publication if it makes sense for their county.

The current law serves to send tax dollars to local newspapers for the sole purpose of guiltning property owners into paying their taxes. Having spent my entire career working with the County Auditor and County Treasurer office, I have found the practice to not only be insulting, but ineffective.

I personally have no interest in continuing this practice. People do not need to be guilted into paying their taxes; they do not need to be embarrassed. They know that they owe their taxes, they know the consequences of not paying their taxes and for many reasons they are unable to pay them. Let's stop this antiquated practice and in doing so, save the taxpayers of this State hundreds of thousands of dollars that can go to real needs.

Thank you for the chance to speak today on House Bill 255. I would be happy to take any questions at this time.