



Akron Public Schools.

Senate Ways and Means Committee HB 140 Opposition Testimony

Akron Public Schools, Summit County
Ryan Pendleton, CFO/Treasurer

June 1, 2022

Chair Blessing, Vice Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill (HB) 140.

My name is Ryan Pendleton and I serve as the CFO/Treasurer for Akron Public Schools in Summit County. We are the fifth largest district in Ohio with approximately 20,000 students enrolled. Prior to the global pandemic, Akron Public Schools was on the ballot about every six years. The last ballot initiatives passed in 2006 and 2012. Levy initiatives are carefully considered with the community and often take up to a year to properly engage around the levy particulars. Our school district provides detailed information about our levies to our community. By engaging in a community discussion, we are able to explain and answer questions voters may have about the complex and detailed nature of a school levy.

We appreciate the Committee's commitment to ballot uniformity and transparency but respectfully disagree with the proposed language in HB 140. As required by the Ohio Constitution, school districts must raise a portion of the funds to educate the students in its community. This is often referred to as a school district's "local share." Most districts raise their local share by placing a property tax levy on the ballot.

Ohio's property taxation system is extremely complex, and as a result, the ballot language is technical in nature and needs to remain very consistent. I believe the proposed changes in HB 140 will make it more difficult for school districts to pass levies and more difficult for taxpayers to understand. While reviewing HB 140 and its impact to our district we were left with many more questions about the proposed language. Does HB 140 take into account the different millage rates between residents and commercial taxpayers? How is HB 920 factored in ballot language, when looking at the voted versus effective rates, allowing taxpayers to calculate the impact? How is Homestead and Rollback included? The answer to these questions is unclear which will lead to many more issues for schools and taxpayers.

We appreciate the goal to provide consistent and clear language for all levy types, however HB 140 does just the opposite. It complicates the process further to the detriment of schools and their communities.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. **We urge you to oppose HB 140.** Thank you for your consideration.