



**House Ways and Means Committee
HB 1 - Opponent Testimony**

**Springfield City School District, Clark County
Robert F. Hill, Ed.D., Chief Executive Officer & Superintendent**

March 28, 2023

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Merrin, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written opponent testimony on House Bill (HB) 1.

My name is Robert Hill and I serve as the Chief Executive Officer and Superintendent for the Springfield City School District in Clark County. In my twenty-six years in education, I have also served as a high school social studies teacher, coach, assistant high school principal, and high school principal.

The Springfield City School District is in Springfield, considered a legacy city and currently the 12th largest city in Ohio. The District, which is the 32nd largest in Ohio, serves approximately 7,300 students across sixteen buildings and is the most diverse and welcoming school district in Clark County with a racial overview including student sub-groups of approximately 46% White, 27% Black, 15% Multiracial, 11% Hispanic, and 1% Asian or Pacific Islander. We are part of the Federal Community Eligibility Program and considered to be 100% economically disadvantaged, which allows us to provide no-cost breakfast and lunch to ALL students. In addition and of note, the District offers free preschool to ALL students and typically serves over 500 students each school year, which is absolutely necessary due to our extreme levels of poverty, to ensure that our students begin school on somewhat equal footing. Unfortunately, our early learning program is not fully-funded by the state, so every dollar of funding that we receive has an impact.

Due to the adverse societal conditions that exist in our city, our students struggle to meet performance standards. However, our team has created multiple systems to support the well-being of our students and staff, as well as foster the appropriate academic environment and culture that will lead to our mission of student growth and success.

In supporting this mission and during my eight-year tenure in Springfield, our residents have dependably passed three levy renewals, converting one 10.61 mil emergency operating levy to a continuous substitute levy. It is important to note that February 2006 is the last new operating tax levy passed in the District. This is important because due to low property valuations associated with a legacy city, one-mil in Springfield only raises \$78.00 per student, as compared to neighboring districts of similar size raising well over \$250.00 per pupil.

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The Springfield City School District opposes HB 1 because it results in a significant tax increase for residential and agricultural taxpayers, as well as a loss in local tax revenue for schools and local governments. According to the Fiscal Note from the Legislative Service Commission (LSC), the following changes will occur from a statewide perspective as a result of HB 1:

- \$929 million annual **tax increase** for residential and agricultural property taxpayers;
- \$157 million annual **tax decrease** for business and commercial property taxpayers; and
- \$538 million annual **decrease in local tax revenues** for schools and local governments.

The specific fiscal impact of HB 1 on the Springfield City School District is a loss of \$587,346. In a community that relies on the support of the state to provide 76% of our funding to serve a diverse and impoverished population, any loss in tax revenue has a severe and negative affect on student learning.

Chair Roemer and members of the committee, thank you for your time and attention to this matter and I can be reached at (937) 505-2806 to answer questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'R Hill'.

Robert F. Hill, Ed.D.
Chief Executive Officer &
Superintendent of Schools