



Ohio House State & Local Government Committee

April 10, 2018

Re: Written Testimony on HB 500 - Township Law Changes

Dear Madam Chair, Anielski and distinguished members of the House State & Local Government Committee,

On behalf of Liberty Township, Butler County, we appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 500. Liberty Township, Butler County, is in southwestern Ohio, North of West Chester Township and South of the City of Monroe off I-75. We are a community of approximately 42,000 residents and 500 businesses. Our 2018 Budget is \$28M, we are a limited home rule township and an OTA member and member of CLOUT (Coalition of Large Ohio Urban Townships).

Our interest in supporting HB 500 is to provide some reasonable modifications and permissions for township throughout Ohio. This proposed bill addresses several priorities CLOUT and our township see as beneficial changes in Ohio Law. I would like to focus on two specific segments of the bill:

1. Obligations Incurred Threshold (ORC §507.11) - This modification permits, as authorized by the township board of trustees, a township employee or official to be able to incur up to \$10,000 (up from the current \$2,500). In Liberty Township, we have had unexpected service issues with one of our fire engines that resulted in a repair cost of \$11,836.96, which needed to be completed ASAP to get the vehicle back in service. By law, we had to call a special meeting to approve this expenditure. That meant coordinating with the trustees' and fiscal officer's schedules to get a quick meeting planned, 24-hour notice sent out, approval at the open meeting, and finally the vehicle could be repaired. This is not the only time we have had to go through this lengthy procedure to make repairs to a front-line emergency vehicle. A similar situation occurred within months of the first whereby a fire apparatus was out of commission for some time for a \$4,255.20 repair. These situations can cause delays for our emergency crews from reaching our residents, businesses and visitors in a timely manner and thus can prove to be life-threatening.

As both emergency and road/service vehicles include more technology, the costs to repair have increased to the point where \$2,500 is not sufficient for our administrator to authorize the repair in a timely fashion. Therefore, the suggested permissive increase to \$10,000 would at least create a more timely and safer way of doing business, especially in a limited home rule township.

2. Community Event Fee (ORC §503.58) - This new permissive tax would allow a township to charge a community event fee to amounts being paid at certain events held within the township. As we develop, Liberty Township has a plan for developing an entertainment segment off the proposed Millikin Interchange. The events in this area would be privately run and would add to the business atmosphere and attractiveness to Butler County. Unfortunately, with the added visitors to our area, there would be a need for additional staffing of police, fire, road and other personnel by the Township to ensure the safety of the public. While these events are beneficial to the public and the private organizations or businesses, the cost to the township will be significant at times to provide the necessary safety services. This fee will help to cover those costs and shall not exceed an amount equal to 5% of the admission price.

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, Liberty Township Trustees, Butler County, strongly endorses House Bill 500 in its current form as it will provide a reasonable approach to more efficiency without losing the transparency at the local level. We respectfully urge your support and recommendation to the entire House of HB 500.

Sincerely,



Tom Farrell
Trustee Chair



Steve Schramm
Trustee Vice Chair



Christine Maticic
Trustee and
Chair, OTA CLOUT Executive
Committee