



*Stronger Counties. Stronger Ohio.*

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Cheryl Subler, Executive Director

## Ohio Senate Finance Committee

### Interested Party 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). Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to this committee.

I write to you today to thank you for your support of indigent defense reimbursement. As you well know, fully reimbursing counties for their costs incurred in fulfilling the state's obligation to provide indigent defense has been CCAO's number one budget priority. Thank you for listening to the requests from counties across the state and maintaining appropriation levels that are projected to provide 100 percent reimbursement to counties. This is a much-appreciated step in strengthening the state-county partnership, and counties remain grateful for this investment.

CCAO also appreciates the Senate's inclusion of an amendment which would allow the T-CAP program to remain voluntary for counties while permissively expanding the program to include certain fourth degree felony offenders. This provides the flexibility that is needed to account for differentiations in available treatment and security services from county to county.

Additionally, CCAO thanks the Senate for removing a budget provision restricting the Psychotropic Drug Reimbursement Program to only existing programs. The substitute bill also maintained language to allow counties to access 0.5% of unused transit sales tax authority, subject to voter approval, to fund county jail operations. The substitute bill also provides \$15 million in funding for the Rural Industrial Park Loan Program. These are all appreciated provisions that benefit counties.

There are several budgetary provisions where CCAO seeks further changes. Removing employment services and employment places services from the sales tax base will produce significant and permanent revenue reductions for all 88 counties. The Ohio Department of Taxation estimates that once fully implemented, counties and transit authorities will collectively lose \$38.5 million per year due to this tax base narrowing.



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CCAO supports a broad-based sales tax that provides revenue stability to fund critical county services.

CCAO seeks an additional \$1 million for MARCS radio subscriber fee offsets. These radios are utilized by many public safety personnel, including many county sheriff's offices. The additional \$1 million would help maintain the \$10 per month local user fee and avoid further cost increases in equipping county public safety personnel.

The Senate substitute bill also reduces state funding for broadband expansion grants. Access to broadband is a critical factor in allowing Ohioans across all 88 counties to access global marketplaces, acquire educational resources, utilize telehealth services and more. The state has a significant role to play in ensuring citizen access to these services. Counties look to partner with the state to ensure that residents of all 88 counties have access to affordable and reliable broadband service.

CCAO maintains its support for 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. Counties cannot be expected to bear the costs of implementing these new programs alone and appreciate any support the state is able to provide.

Finally, the substitute bill removed a House-added provision which would extend the temporary authority for public bodies to meet via electronic technology until December 31, 2021. CCAO supports this extension, which many counties have utilized successfully over the past year to conduct county business more efficiently while encouraging broader citizen participation and engagement.

This summarizes CCAO's positions on several key budgetary provisions. Once again, CCAO is very appreciative of the Senate's support on critical issues like indigent defense reimbursement, and we look forward to partnering with the Senate on several improvements to ensure HB 110 serves to strengthen all counties for a stronger Ohio.

If you have any questions about my testimony, please contact any member of the CCAO policy team.