



November 26, 2023

Chair Mathews, Vice Chair King, Ranking Member Lightbody and Members of the Ohio House Pensions Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Esteemed Committee Members,

As a devoted representative of Beavercreek City Council, I write to you today with an urgent plea on behalf of our community regarding House Bill 296.

The safety and security of our beloved Beavercreek residents stand as our paramount concern. Our city takes immense pride in supporting our dedicated police personnel and their families. We have consistently demonstrated this commitment through substantial annual investments in our first responders, a testament to our unwavering dedication to their crucial role in safeguarding our community. A recent example is the unmatched response time that our officers had regarding the mass shooting that took place at the Beavercreek Walmart on November 20th, 2023. Our officers were on-site within three minutes.

It is crucial to note that Beavercreek does not levy an income tax, relying instead on individual property tax levies to fund essential services, particularly our esteemed Police Department. A staggering 27% of our community's property tax contributions are channeled towards supporting police operations annually, second only to the critical costs associated with maintaining our streets and infrastructure. The lion's share, approximately 75%, of these costs can be attributed to the personnel expenses of our Police Department.

However, the proposed House Bill 296 presents a formidable challenge to our fiscal stability and the sustainability of our vital services. This bill seeks to substantially increase the contribution amounts demanded from employers of full-time municipal police officers to the Ohio Police and Fire Pension Fund. Specifically, it aims to raise this contribution from the current 19.50% to 24% by January 1, 2027.

The financial implications of this bill for Beavercreek are dire. The projected increase in employer contribution payments would translate to a staggering burden, amounting to approximately \$82,482 during the initial phase-in period and a staggering \$55,003 yearly increase by 2027. These figures, mind you, do not factor in any potential wage increases that may be granted to our police force during this period.

Such an astronomical rise in pension obligations would inevitably restrict our ability to allocate necessary fiscal resources towards vital areas such as recruitment, training, and incentives crucial for



supporting our valued police personnel. The impact of this proposed hike would significantly affect our ability to sustain the current service levels, potentially leading to a demand for additional levy dollars from our residents.

It is imperative to acknowledge the need for a balanced approach. While we recognize the importance of fair and adequate pension schemes for our hardworking officers, we firmly believe that the responsibility for any increase should be shared. We cannot overlook the repercussions this bill will bring, jeopardizing the hiring or retention of crucial police personnel, equating to a potential loss of 7.8% of our total sworn officers by 2027.

Beavercreek takes great pride in its responsible management of taxpayer dollars, ensuring a harmonious balance between resident well-being, business interests, and strategic investments that pave the way for our community's future growth. However, HB296 poses a substantial threat to our ability to make informed fiscal decisions tailored to our community's needs.

I implore this esteemed Committee to stand in opposition to HB296 in its current form. I respectfully urge you to collaborate with the Ohio Municipal League and the Ohio Mayor's Alliance to explore viable alternatives. By doing so, we can work together to devise solutions that support our city's financial stability while preserving our ability to independently direct investments in our public safety departments.

Your thoughtful consideration of this matter is immensely appreciated. Beavercreek stands at a crossroads, and your support in this crucial juncture will undoubtedly shape the future of our community. Thank you for your time and dedication to serving the interests of the people.

Sincerely,

City Council Member and Vice Mayor Elect
City of Beavercreek