



Representative Brett Hudson Hillyer
Ohio's 51st House District

Chair John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 153, that addresses the issue of government encroachment on property rights. This bill aims to limit the ability of the government to engage in equity theft from property owners in the state of Ohio.

Ohio currently holds a less than desirable ranking among states that permit equity theft from property owners. It is imperative that we take immediate action to protect the property rights of our constituents. The plight of property owners in Ohio demands our attention, and it is our responsibility to ensure that their rights are upheld.

Allow me to draw your attention to a recent case before the Supreme Court of the United States that highlights the urgency of this issue. The case relates to a property that was valued at over \$300,000 and was taken for an underpayment of about \$8.00 in property tax. Such a disproportionate action is an egregious violation of the principles of fairness and justice upon which our nation is built.

Moreover, it is unfortunate to not that cases of property theft predominantly occur in majority minority communities, especially in communities where property owners find themselves without the resources to stand up to these government actions. This is an alarming trend that highlights the urgent need to address the issues that enable such injustices to persist.

This legislation seeks to close loopholes and establish a framework that upholds the principles of fairness, transparency, and respect for property rights. Specifically, the bill requires impositions to be equal to or great than the property's fair market value before it can be given to a local government, nonprofit, or school. If the fair market value exceeds impositions, it has to go through the normal foreclosure process.

By passing this bill, we will send a clear message that the government must not abuse its power at the expense of hardworking property owners. It is our duty as public servants to protect the rights of Ohioans and ensure that they are not unjustly deprived of their hard-earned equity.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 153. I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. Thank you.