

April 9, 2024

135th General Assembly
Ohio Statehouse
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4275

Members of the 135th Ohio General Assembly,

We, the undersigned, urge you to support Senate Bill 23/House Bill 145, which will increase procurement opportunities and save taxpayers' dollars for municipalities and school districts by clarifying joint purchasing authority.

Joint purchasing is a widely utilized method of government procurement in Ohio, allowing various public entities such as local governments, school districts, and state agencies to purchase goods and services. This collaborative approach not only enables these entities to fulfill their purchasing needs but also serves as a cost-effective measure, ultimately saving time and money. Senate Bill 23/House Bill 145 seeks to enhance the success of joint purchasing in Ohio by clarifying that the installation, repair, renovation, replacement, or maintenance of equipment, material, or supplies falls under R.C. 9.48. This clarification ensures that political subdivisions have the authority to participate in joint purchasing contracts for these services.

Administration of government functions should be as efficient and cost-effective as possible, and granting political subdivisions this authority will save taxpayer funds, reduce administrative burden, and expedite project delivery. Local governments are struggling with limited funding and maintaining a staff to procure the goods and services necessary to operate in a manner that best serves them. Joint purchasing contracts provide tangible cost savings by leveraging the collective spend of multiple agencies under one contract, thus driving down prices.

Joint purchasing contracts represent a widely adopted procurement strategy found in every state across the country. Joint purchasing contracts are government led solicitations conducted on behalf of other units of government. Through cooperative purchasing, entities benefit from cost-effective contracts established by a public and competitive procurement process. Joint purchasing does not circumvent a competitive process, it simply utilizes an already facilitated process that is public, open, and transparent.

Joint purchasing agreements are both compliant and competitive, ensuring efficiency and cost-effectiveness. These contracts adhere to state and local regulations, from advertising to awarding, promoting transparency throughout the procurement process. The competitive procurement laws as well as the rules governing the purchasing entity are met before the political subdivision could utilize the joint purchasing contract for its procurement needs. These contracts are publicly advertised, competitively bid, and awarded to responsible and responsive Ohio contractors, offering competitively priced products and services.

We urge the passage of Senate Bill 23/House Bill 145 which will expand political subdivision joint purchasing authority to expressly include purchases of and including installation, repair, renovation, replacement, and maintenance of equipment, material, and supplies. This bill simply provides for another procurement option for local governments, not a mandate. This will allow Ohio procurement professionals the ability to continue to be strategic while conducting government procurements and to ensure that Ohio has all the methods of procurement available to ensure they are leveraging their maximum buying power, saving dollars and time.

Sincerely,

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