

Ohio House of Representatives
WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 60

Respectively Submitted By:
Dr. E. Douglas Beach, CEO
Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging

Tuesday, March 21, 2023

Chairman Bill Roemer, Vice-Chairman Merrin, Ranking Member Troy and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 60. The proposed legislation purports to increase the amount of Ohio's Homestead Tax Exemption program while simultaneously expanding the income qualifications.

My name is Dr. E. Douglas Beach and I serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging. Our Agency's mission is to provide choices for people to live independently in the place they want to call home. We serve older adults and individuals with disabilities in Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties. This proposed legislation would directly benefit our clients who are homeowners living on very tight fixed incomes.

In 1970, Ohio voters approved a constitutional amendment permitting a homestead exemption that reduced property taxes for lower-income, older adults and permanently, totally disabled Ohioans, by shielding some of the market value of their homes from taxation. The exemption, which takes the form of a credit on property tax bills, allows qualifying homeowners to exempt up to \$25,000 of the market value of their homes from all local property taxes.

House Bill 60 proposes important adjustments to the current homestead exemption law by:

- Increasing the homestead exemption for elderly or disabled homeowners from \$25,000 to \$40,000 of the home's appraised value or cost and indexed for an inflationary increase each year.
- Expanding the eligibility for that homestead exemption by raising the income threshold to qualify for the exemption, currently \$34,200 in a modified Ohio adjusted gross income, to \$45,000.

Like you – the majority of people want to stay in their homes as they age. Programs, such as the Homestead Exemption, will keep a roof over their heads while saving them money often needed to pay utility bills, food and prescriptive medications.

As our aging population continues to grow exponentially, we need to support legislative efforts that enable older adults to live and thrive in their own homes and communities. Mr. Chairman and members of the Ways and Means Committee, thank you, for this opportunity to offer testimony on House Bill 60 on behalf of Ohio's vulnerable older adults and individuals with disabilities.