

Proponent Testimony
House Bill 344
Mike Gabrail
The Crossroads Group

Chairman Roemer, Vice Chair Lorenz, Ranking Member Troy and members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Mike Gabrail and I am the Chief Executive Officer of The Crossroads Group. The Crossroads Group owns and manages large multifamily apartment complexes across Ohio. As such, we support the passage of HB 344.

HB 344 seeks to do one simple thing: tighten language from HB 126 from the 134th General Assembly. That legislation simply sought to bring fairness and predictability to the property tax challenge laws. It was debated, voted upon, and signed by the Governor. The only issue still outstanding are blatant disregard of HB 126 and loopholes.

Prior to the passage of HB 126, the property tax litigation process was being abused by political subdivisions to extort additional moneys above and beyond voted upon taxes from property owners. In the case of our company, this resulted in unfair and burdensome property tax valuations that ultimately hurt our tenants. Property owners worked with members of the legislature to address and fix issues related to these abuses.

While the goal of HB 126 was to provide certainty to property taxpayers, it has been undermined by determined money hungry political subdivisions who have exploited loopholes in HB 126 and, in some cases, blatantly disregarded the language of B 126, to continue to extort and abuse property owners. Despite courts ruling against many

of these abusive political subdivisions, clever lawyers have found ways around the clearly expressed will of the legislature on these matters.

HB 126 has been debated. The will of the people, through the legislative process and the Governor's signature, has been made and codified into law. HB 344 merely seeks to close the loopholes and punish political subdivisions for violating the clear language of HB 126, and I would urge your support of the bill.