



Public Children Services Association of Ohio

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To: Chairman Calvert and Members of the House Finance and Appropriations Committee

From: Crystal Allen, Executive Director and Greg Kapcar, Assistant Legislative Director

Date: February 1, 2006

Subject: **Concerns with Substitute House Bill 250, Special Taxing Districts**

The Public Children Services Association of Ohio supports the funding of substance abuse and intervention services, behavioral health services, and autism services; but opposes Substitute HB 250 and the creation of “special” taxing districts that would:

- **undercut the existing levy system** by increasing “levy fatigue,” contributing to confusion and draining already scarce resources from child welfare and other vitally important health and human services; especially in light of the loss of the tangible personal property tax
- **complicate the tax system** by creating potentially hundreds of new taxing districts across Ohio
- **take control and power away from elected, public officials** giving it to unelected persons to put tax increases on the ballot

Undercutting the existing levy system – levy fatigue, confusion and draining resources
In many communities, discerning taxpayers have reluctantly supported property taxes for agencies such as Public Children Services, MR/DD, Alcohol & Drug, and Mental Health Services as well as schools. Only 42 of 88 counties currently have a children services levy (a few are combined with other health and social services) indicating a majority of Ohio communities continue to oppose additional property taxes for services.

Creating a new category of “Student Special Services District” compounds the dilemma for voters who already believe they financially go above and beyond by supporting levies for Children Services, Mental Health and Substance Abuse services, and MR/DD, as well as their school district. Haven’t they already supported student educational services as well as special services for children?

Complicating the tax system

Having another taxing jurisdiction increases the complexity of the tax system for those who pay taxes. During the 2006-2007 biennial budget process, the General Assembly was clear in its message to counties to “coordinate and consolidate;” HB 250 does neither by potentially adding new taxing districts across Ohio.

Taking control and power away from elected, public officials

As currently written, Sub. HB 250 allows unelected officials to put property tax levies on the ballot. The general public depends upon elected officials to manage the tax requests - it is currently difficult enough to make an informed decision on the current levies asked of our citizens.