



Safe Children, Stable Families, Supportive Communities

January 22, 2020

Opponent Testimony HB76

General Government and Agency Review Committee

Mary D. Wachtel, Director of Public Policy

Public Children Services Association of Ohio

37 W. Broad Street, Suite 1100

Columbus, OH 43215

614.224.5802

mary@pcsao.org

Chair Schuring, Vice-Chair Rulli, Ranking Member O'Brien, and Members of the Committee, this written testimony is on behalf of the Trustees and members of the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). PCSAO is a membership-driven association of Ohio's county public children services agencies (PCSAs) that advocates for and promotes children services program excellence and sound public policy for safe children, stable families, and supportive communities.

Unlike most other states, Ohio's children services system is heavily reliant on local funding; in SFY2018, nearly half of the system was funded by local dollars.¹ Currently, 52 PCSAs maintain local levies. It is within this context that we have reviewed HB76 and concluded that we oppose the bill in its current form.

We appreciate that the intent of HB76 is to update antiquated ballot language, increase transparency, and provide uniformity. However, we believe that the bill will instead create confusion and make levy ballot language less transparent.

Our main concern centers on the provision that would require property tax election notices and ballot language to present a property tax levy's rate in dollars for each \$100,000 of fair market value instead of in dollars for each \$100 of taxable value. We agree that \$100 increments are not relevant in today's real estate market. However, the transition from "taxable value" to "fair market value" is problematic. Most property owners assume the latter to be the possible sale value of their home which is typically quite different from the value on which their property taxes are calculated. HB76 does not account for this and likely will cause voters to misinterpret the cost of levies.

Other elements of the bill likely to cause voter confusion include failure to factor in property tax abatements and exemptions, and a "one-size-fits-all" approach to property classifications. For the latter, "taxable value" takes into account the different rates based on the types of property but "fair market value" does not.

Our members believe that voters should make informed decisions when considering levy requests. This bill would make that more difficult for voters. For these reasons, PCSAO opposes HB76 and asks that you not support the bill with the current "fair market value" provision. We are happy to partner with the General Assembly to address these concerns and to improve levy transparency overall. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

ⁱ PCSAO 14th Edition Factbook, 2019. Data provided by ODJFS, special data runs, received 11/19/2018 and 1/4/2019. Additional calculations by PCSAO.