



Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and Members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to write in opposition to HB 342, which eliminates the ability of local officials to place local tax-related proposals on an August special election ballot, mandating they can only appear on general and primary election ballots. The bill also modifies the information conveyed in election notices and ballot language for property tax levies.

This bill prevents municipalities from using a vital option in balancing their budgets. Time is of the essence for many municipalities struggling with revenue deficits due to cuts in the Local Government Fund and other dried-up streams of revenue. Municipalities needing cash flow to pay the bills and keep essential services going do not have time to wait for the next general or primary election. This could force municipalities to instead raise credits to keep the lights on.

It is also important to note that special election ballots provide a key opportunity to adequately educate voters on a tax levy. When a levy is the sole issue on the ballot, it is easier to inform voters as to what the levy would actually accomplish. In a general or primary election, levies are overshadowed by the names on the ballot and can mean voters are making an uninformed decision on an important local matter.

In the interest of vital cash flow and adequate voter education, we ask that you stand opposed to HB 342.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Regards,

Kent Scarrett
Executive Director
Ohio Municipal League