

OPPONENT TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1
OHIO HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

Cuyahoga County Executive Chris Ronayne
March 14, 2023

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Merrin, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the Ohio House Ways and Means Committee – thank you on behalf of Cuyahoga County for the opportunity to provide written opponent testimony on House Bill 1.

As written, the legislation would significantly harm the work Cuyahoga County and our region undertake to keep our communities safe and healthy and provide a good quality of life for people in northeast Ohio. It puts at risk the region’s collective fiscal stability as well as threatens our ability to provide the critical services our citizens have earned and deserve.

Cuyahoga County alone would realize losses of more than \$33 million a year – much of which would take a major toll on the most vulnerable among us. Nearly \$11 million, for example, would be stripped each year from our Board of Developmental Disabilities, which supports and empowers people of all ages to live, work, and participate in community life. Our Health and Human Services Levy – covering services such foster care, adoption, and mental health treatment – would see a loss of nearly \$14 million a year. Meanwhile, our general revenue fund would lose about \$5 million annually – leaving less to invest in public safety, housing initiatives, and economic development, among other important areas for the county.

While the tax changes contemplated under H.B. 1 would create major challenges for Cuyahoga County, the bill’s impact would devastate as a whole our region – from our libraries and parks to our schools and municipalities. A jewel in northeast Ohio, Cleveland Metroparks, for example, could lose upwards of \$90 million to \$100 million over the next 10 years, according to its chief financial officer in a recent *cleveland.com* story. The Cuyahoga County Public Library, another regional treasure, indicated to *cleveland.com* the system would lose more than \$8 million.

Ultimately, our citizens will bear the cost of this legislation, whether through cuts in services, or through increased taxes to make up the difference in lost revenue caused by the legislation’s proposed state income tax rate change. From our perspective, the price borne by taxpayers, libraries, parks, schools, mental health agencies, and local governments is far too high to justify passage of H.B. 1.

We respectfully ask the Ohio House Ways and Means Committee to vote against advancing H.B. 1.