



STATEHOUSE REPORT

Published by: County Commissioners Association of Ohio

209 East State Street • Columbus, Ohio 43215-4309
Phone: 614-221-5627 • Fax: 614-221-6986 • www.ccao.org

April 19, 2024

Senate Select Housing Committee unveils recommendations, bill introductions

After holding 12 hearings in Columbus and across the state, members of the [Senate Select Committee on Housing](#) (Chaired by Senator Michelle Reynolds) held a press conference Wednesday to announce their findings. The report, which [may accessed here](#), contains 23 recommendations to improve the availability of housing across the state:

1. **Ohio Housing Dashboard** – Department of Development will develop statewide database to monitor key metrics such as home prices, rental rates, housing inventory levels, homeownership and foreclosure rates, and other trends.
2. **Ohio Housing Toolkit** – Department of Development will support an online resource hub to support local governments to support housing development and community planning. Resources would include templates, models, best practices, and expert guidance for revising zoning codes and creating comprehensive plans.
3. **Zoning** – Technical assistance to help local governments modernize zoning codes to increase opportunities for housing.
4. **Alternative Housing** – Review other state's policies on alternative housing and consider policies to increase the use of manufactured and modular homes, tiny homes, and accessory dwelling units.
5. **Homeownership** – Review state policies related to homeownership, including downpayment assistance and tax incentives. Review policies that encourage the redevelopment of owner-occupied housing into rental units and study the impacts of institutional home purchasing.

6. **Consumer Protection** – Review existing consumer protections in the home buying process, including home equity arrangements, as well as representation in the buying and selling process.
7. **Updating Codes for Renters** – Monitor market challenges that create affordability challenges for renters. Provide financial education and counseling to all individuals residing in subsidized housing. Protect renters by requiring landlord's to provide contact information. Review state law regarding eviction sealing.
8. **Workforce Housing Tax Credit Program** – Review existing housing tax credit programs and consider allocating a portion of the state's tax credit programs to middle-income workers in Ohio's high-demand jobs.
9. **Transaction Transparency** – Consider incentives and safeguards for renters in housing owned by out of state LLCs.
10. **Housing Legislation** – Introduce comprehensive legislation that addresses a broad spectrum of policy reforms to enhance housing affordability, accessibility, and availability in Ohio.
11. **Qualified Residential Construction Personnel** – Review training and certification requirements in the ORC to increase the workforce of qualified residential construction personnel in Ohio.
12. **Third-Party Reviewer Services** – Review other states' laws regarding pre-approved residential building plans and recommend a process for statewide building permit application approval.
13. **Ohio Department of Development** – Consider renaming Department of Development as the Ohio Department of Housing and Development.
14. **Ohio Housing Accelerator** – Review the implementation of the Welcome Home Ohio program and incorporate changes to increase the number of projects and expand the number of eligible buyers. Permit additional types of homes to be eligible for funding, including alternative forms of housing such as manufactured and modular homes, tiny homes, and accessory dwelling units.
15. **Ohio Housing Finance Agency** – Add four legislative members to OHFA and require OHFA to present an annual update to the House and Senate Committees dealing with housing. Review OHFA's process and scoring of projects.
16. **Ohio Housing Trust Fund** – Add four legislative members to the OHTF board.

17. **Ohio YIMBY Campaign** – Launch a statewide messaging campaign promoting Ohio as a pro-housing state, “Ohio Says Yes in My Backyard.”
18. **Ohio Housing Capacity Building Grant Fund** – Provide an incentive to political subdivisions to build responsible density and act as a resource for communities for housing challenges. Grants could address housing studies, planning, zoning updates, surveying and engineering costs, housing revitalization projects, controlling blight and nuisance properties, and programs to increase homeownership.
19. **Property Taxes** – Submit all testimony and items for review from the Select Committee on Housing to the Property Tax Review Committee.
20. **All Ohio Future Fund** – Consider Expanding the AOFF to include funding residential infrastructure needs to develop workforce housing as a component for site readiness and preparation.
21. **Department of Medicaid** – Consider a pilot use of Medicaid 1115 waiver options for Ohio Medicaid recipients to expand options for housing stability and support through their managed care health plans.
22. **Housing Tax Policy** – Review Tax Policies for the construction of residential properties to better focus on desired outcomes, including increasing homeownership.
23. **Housing Referendum** – Consider legislation to increase the threshold for signatures to place a housing referendum (zoning change) on the ballot to align with other common types of ballot issues.

In conjunction with the release of the report, Senator Michele Reynolds and Senate Hearcel Craig have co-sponsored four bills to address some of these issues:

- [Senate Bill 243](#) – statement of intent to address local zoning regulations;
- [Senate Bill 244](#) – authorize local governments to create residential stability zones where residents may qualify for a partial property tax exemption;
- [Senate Bill 245](#) – eviction, real estate representation agreements, residential building code enforcement, and real property transfers;
- [Senate Bill 246](#) – Rename the Department of Development to the Department of Housing and Development; appoint legislative members to OHFA and the Ohio Housing Trust Fund.

Separately, several House members also announced a plan to introduce legislation that focuses on housing. Representative Adam Mathews and Representative Dani Isaacsohn

stated that their plan will create an annual housing fund of \$200 million dedicated to providing grants to municipalities and townships that adopt a minimum number of specific pro-housing policies listed in the legislation. Funding would be created through the elimination of non-business credit given to owners of multiple properties irrespective of owner occupancy.

The legislation, which has not yet been introduced, will include state actions to support housing, such as tax abatements near mega development sites and litigation protection for single family and condo builders. Some of the recommended local housing policies include density bonuses for developers that include low-income housing; incentivizing modular housing; passing accessory dwelling unit legislation; developing ready to build sites that are zoned and have utility hook-ups; creating a fast-track review process for trusted developers; and reforming the permitting process to increase the rate of permit reviews for housing developers.

CCAO will continue to monitor housing legislation and make members aware of opportunities to engage on this topic.

Members with questions should contact Senior Policy Analyst Jon Honeck at jhoneck@ccao.org or 614-220-7982.

CCAO to provide invited testimony to Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform

On Wednesday, CCAO was notified by House Republican Caucus staff that the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform will be hosting a local government day on May 1 and is inviting CCAO to provide testimony. The current plan will have CCAO providing in-person remarks for between 20 and 30 minutes with questions from committee members to follow.

The policy staff is encouraging members from across the state, even if you will be unable to attend the committee, to provide written comments to help educate the committee on property tax issues in your county.

If you are interested in submitting written testimony or being one of the members to provide in-person remarks and answer committee questions, please contact Senior Policy Analyst Jon Honeck at jhoneck@ccao.org or 614-220-7982.

Advocacy Task Force reviews advocacy toolkit, bill tracker

This week, the CCAO Advocacy Task Force met and reviewed documents that CCAO staff has produced to assist members with advocating on their county's behalf.

First, the task force reviewed a County Advocacy Toolkit, generated from a survey CCAO conducted in January and feedback from task force members. The tool kit includes tips and tricks on how members can best advocate their legislators and state officials both for CCAO

priorities and for issues important to their individual counties. It also features samples of practices that other members have found useful in the past.

The Task Force and the full CCAO Board of Directors are reviewing the final draft of the toolkit. The policy team expects to make the toolkit available to all members by the end of April.

Second, the policy team showed the task force a new feature on CCAO's website that we are hopeful will enhance members' advocacy efforts. The [County Bill Tracker](#) contains information on several bills in front of the General Assembly that may have an impact on counties. Each bill has its own page which shows the bill's sponsor(s), the bill's status, a description the bill's provisions, CCAO's position on the bill, and any other important notes.

The Bill Tracker is sorted by which CCAO Standing Committee the bills would fall under the purview of, with some additional bills highlighted on the tracker's home page.

Legislative Activity

Committee Hearings

The following committees held hearings this week regarding bills that may be of interest to counties.

House Commerce and Labor

- [House Bill 327](#) (Representative Scott Wiggam and Representative D.J. Swearingen): To require certain contractors and employers to use E-Verify.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony from NumbersUSA, ACT Ohio, the Ohio State Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters, FAIR, Main Street Patriots, Ohio Christian Alliance, Lake Erie Electric, and MMC Contractors National Inc.

House Economic and Workforce Development

- [House Bill 349](#) (Representative Tony Barhorst and Representative Don Jones): To authorize the creation of areas within which incentives are available to encourage the development of natural gas pipelines and other infrastructure and to make an appropriation.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [Senate Bill 75](#) (Senator Louis Blessing, III): To allow two or more municipalities to create a joint economic development district without involving a township.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

House Government Oversight

- [House Bill 331](#) (Representative Adam Mathews and Representative Tom Young): Regarding village dissolution.
 - Third hearing, no testimony

Senate Judiciary

- [House Bill 305](#) (Representative Brian Steward and Representative Richard Brown): To provide for the electronic filing of pleadings or documents in courts of common pleas except a probate or juvenile court, in municipal courts, and in county courts, to permit the clerk to disburse funds for the computerization of the clerk's office without the court's authorization, and to permit municipal and county courts to increase the maximum amount of their additional fees from ten dollars to twenty dollars to cover the computerization of the clerk's office.
 - First hearing, sponsor testimony

Introduction of Bills

The following bill(s) that may be of interest to counties were introduced this week:

- [House Bill 491](#) (Representative Tom Young and Representative Bob Peterson): To require a political subdivision or state retirement system to provide information on expenditures to the Treasurer of State for inclusion in the Ohio State and Local Government Expenditure Database.
- [Senate Bill 243](#) (Senator Michele Reynolds and Senator Hearcel Craig): To declare the General Assembly's intent to enact legislation addressing local zoning regulations that impede the development of housing in this state.
- [Senate Bill 244](#) (Senator Michele Reynolds and Senator Hearcel Craig): To authorize local governments to create residential stability zones where homeowners may qualify for a partial property tax exemption.
- [Senate Bill 245](#) (Senator Michele Reynolds and Senator Hearcel Craig): To revise the law governing eviction, real estate representation agreements, residential building code enforcement, and real property transfers, and to amend the version of section 3781.10 of the Revised Code that is scheduled to take effect January 1, 2025, to continue the changes after that date.
- [Senate Bill 246](#) (Senator Michele Reynolds and Senator Hearcel Craig): To rename the Department of Development the Department of Housing and Development and to otherwise modify the law related to housing, and to amend the versions of sections 3742.32 and 5104.30 of the Revised Code that are scheduled to take effect January 1, 2025, to continue the changes after that date.

Upcoming Committee Hearings

The following committees are currently scheduled to meet and discuss bills that may be of interest to counties. Other committees will likely meet as well but as of press time for *Statehouse Report* they have not released agendas. Please note that these schedules are subject to change.

If you would like to offer testimony on any bill, please visit the committee page and contact the committee chair's office for instructions on how to submit testimony.

Tuesday, April 23

[House Commerce and Labor](#) (10:00 a.m.)

- [Senate Bill 96](#) (Senator George Lang and Senator Steve Wilson): To allow employers to post certain labor law notices on the Internet.

- First hearing, sponsor testimony
- [House Bill 327](#) (Representative Scott Wiggam and Representative D.J. Swearingen): To require certain contractors and employers to use E-Verify.
 - Third hearing, opponent testimony

[House Commerce and Labor](#) (1:00 p.m.)

- [House Bill 352](#) (Representative Rachel Baker and Representative Sara Carruthers): To establish the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study Commission.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony
- [House Bill 300](#) (Representative Rachel Baker and Representative Sharon Ray): To establish a pilot program for remote treatment of opioid use disorder and to make an appropriation.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony

[House Ways and Means](#) (3:00 p.m.)

- [House Bill 344](#) (Representative Adam Mathews and Representative Thomas Hall): To eliminate the authority to levy replacement property tax levies and to modify the law governing certain property tax complaints.
 - Fifth hearing, all testimony
 - **POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS**
- [House Bill 347](#) (Representative Don Jones): To presume certain trailers and vehicles are sold for agricultural purposes and thus exempt from sales and use tax when sold to established farmers.
 - Fifth hearing, all testimony
 - **POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS**
- [House Bill 378](#) (Representative Brian Lorenz and Representative Nick Santucci): To authorize a full homestead exemption for surviving spouses of members of the uniformed services killed in the line of duty.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony
- [House Bill 424](#) (Representative Beth Lear): To modify the sales and use taxation of delivery network services.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony

Wednesday, April 24

[Senate General Government](#) (9:30 a.m.)

- [Senate Bill 173](#) (Senator Bill DeMora and Senator Theresa Gavarone): To specify that election officials are designated public service workers for purposes of the public records law.
 - Second hearing, proponent testimony
- [Senate Bill 137](#) (Senator Theresa Gavarone and Senator Bill DeMora): To generally prohibit the use of ranked choice voting and to withhold Local Government Fund distributions from a municipality or chartered county that uses ranked choice voting.
 - Third hearing, all testimony
 - **POSSIBLE VOTE**