From left: Cheryl Subler, CCAO Executive Director; Adam Schwiebert, CCAO Policy Analyst; John Leutz, CCAO Assistant Director; Dr. Jon Honeck, Senior Policy Analyst; Rachel Massoud, Policy Analyst
Dear Ohio General Assembly Candidate,

Congratulations on taking the bold step of running for public office! Whether this is your first campaign or you are a seasoned veteran, the process of running for office demands huge amounts of time and effort. Democracy cannot function without individuals willing to step up to serve their communities through elected office, so thank you for putting yourself forward for election this fall.

At the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO), we work every day with elected county commissioners, county executives and county council members to strengthen all 88 counties and make Ohio a better place to live, work and fulfill one’s dreams. I imagine our members have many of the same goals as you – to see Ohio and its local communities prosper. To achieve these goals, CCAO has long held that there must be a strong partnership between state and county government.

We have sent you the 2020 CCAO Candidates Briefing Guide as an introduction to county government and the current challenges and opportunities counties face. As we look forward to the 134th General Assembly, we feel there are many opportunities for the state to partner with counties to make progress on key county priorities. Foremost of these priorities is the state assuming full financial responsibility for the cost of indigent defense. County interests also span the critical issues of revenue stability, economic development, county government reform and more.

At CCAO, we are fortunate to have a policy team devoted to advancing county government. Each member of our policy team brings to the association a richness of experiences and knowledge on a wide variety of county government topics. Should you have any questions about county government during your campaign or during your future service in the General Assembly, please know that the CCAO policy team is a willing and able resource.

Thank you for your consideration of county priorities. For those of you new to CCAO, we hope this marks the beginning of a strong working relationship together. For our existing partners, we look forward to further strengthening our connections in the 134th General Assembly. We wish you all best of luck on the campaign trail and we hope this briefing guide only furthers your interest in strengthening county government and Ohio at-large.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Subler
Executive Director
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Ohio's 88 counties serve as the arm of state government charged with providing vital services on the state's behalf. Counties are given this specific responsibility but limited authority by the Ohio Revised Code. These state mandated services include important functions such as elections, justice and public safety, infrastructure and human services. County commissioners, executives and council members provide funding and establish a budget for their operations and the other county elected officials, including the court system, making them the nexus of all county government and the services it provides.

Counties today are facing challenges on multiple fronts. The economic fallout of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has impacted multiple county revenue streams needed to fund critical services. County revenue streams have weakened or fluctuated considerably, but demand for county resources remains strong.

Prior to the pandemic’s onset, county budgets had already been strained due to past state and federal policy changes. The loss of the Medicaid managed care organization sales tax and reductions in the Local Government Fund (LGF) have resulted in ongoing annual revenue losses of over $300 million. The loss of Ohio’s grandfather clause to the federal Internet Tax Freedom Act will soon result in another approximately $40 million sales tax loss for counties.

Meanwhile, significant cost drivers are placing pressure on county resources. The ongoing opiate epidemic continues to stretch county criminal justice and public safety budgets. As revenues fluctuate and expenses climb, a growing number of counties have delayed capital projects, furloughed staff and slashed departmental budgets. There is great uncertainty about what the future may hold for county finances and the level of critical services counties will be able to provide. A strong state-county partnership is essential during these challenging times.

Fortunately, there have been positive developments in the state-county partnership that have helped counties partially weather these challenges. During the 133rd General Assembly, the DeWine administration and General Assembly made historic investments into county priority areas of indigent defense and Children Services. In the state transportation budget, the governor and General Assembly made great progress in modernizing the funding of Ohio's transportation infrastructure. More recently, the General Assembly has worked to provide counties helpful tools and federal resources to help manage their COVID-19 challenges. While the pandemic has forced the state to partially pull back on some of these investments, these actions still represent a significant and much appreciated strengthening of the state-county partnership.

Looking forward, Ohio and its counties face the dual challenge of combating a public health crisis while simultaneously re-energizing the state’s economy. If counties are to weather the COVID-19 storm and set themselves on a course for fiscal stability and economic revitalization, the state-county partnership must continue to strengthen. There are key steps state lawmakers can take to make that happen.

Priority One:

▸ Full indigent defense funding
Lawmakers should build off of the great progress made in House Bill 166 and have the state assume the full financial responsibility for funding indigent defense reimbursement. Now is the time to fully remove this state-mandated financial burden from counties.
Additional key priorities for a stronger state-county partnership:

▸ **LGF Restoration**  
   Restore the LGF to its previous statutory level of 3.68 percent of General Revenue Fund (GRF) taxes.

▸ **Family First Funding**  
   Ensure that counties do not bear the financial cost of implementing the federal Family First Prevention Services Act.

▸ **Broadband Access**  
   Continue to support and expand broadband expansion efforts to ensure that no Ohioan is excluded from the economic, health, and educational benefits of a digitally connected world.

Further policy solutions to strengthen and revitalize county government and the State of Ohio:

▸ **Capital Funding for County Jails**  
   Aging county jail facilities are ill-equipped to handle a growing and rapidly changing prisoner population. CCAO recommends a $100 million per year, 10-year state capital funding program to underwrite projected county jail costs.

▸ **Sales Tax Base**  
   The sales tax has become the most important revenue source for both the state and counties, yet the General Assembly continually carves out new exemptions from the sales tax. Ohio must protect the existing sales tax base from further erosion.

▸ **Board of Elections**  
   Counties have little authority to control federal and state mandates which increase election administration costs. The state should fully fund election administration.

▸ **Economic Development**  
   Modern, well maintained public infrastructure, coupled with a dependable, skilled workforce are vital when it comes to attracting businesses to Ohio’s communities. The state can partner with counties to create a job friendly environment by focusing on these top policy priorities.
   - Address the needs of modern water and sewer infrastructure.
   - Uphold local best practices and flexibility in county workforce programs.
   - Continue to support Ohio’s valuable water resources through the H2Ohio Fund, Soil and Water Conservation Districts and OSU Extension.

▸ **County Government Reform**  
   Counties stand ready and willing to launch a total reform of county government; however, attempts for large scale change have proven difficult in the past. If Ohio is not ready to take on a comprehensive reform effort, it should consider the items below as a starting point.
   - Provide commissioners with greater budgetary control and management to better manage growing costs.
• Provide commissioners greater flexibility over county Veterans Service Commission operations and funding.

• Relieve counties from outdated or misplaced state health mandates, including county assessments for the state-mandated Bureau of Medically Handicapped Children, tuberculosis treatment and county health department office space.
Who We Are

Ohio’s 88 counties serve as branch administrative offices of the state by providing elections, justice and public safety, infrastructure and human services. The Ohio Revised Code gives counties these specific responsibilities but offers limited authority.

The services provided by county government represent some of the most direct interactions many Ohioans have with any level of government. From providing public safety to economic development to human services and more, county government’s impact on the daily lives of Ohioans is profound. Today, county governments across Ohio are forced to address growing demands with limited resources. To strengthen counties and improve the well-being of all Ohioans, there must be collaboration and cooperation between the state and county governments – in other words, a strong partnership.

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) advances effective county government for Ohio through legislative advocacy, education and training, technical assistance and research, quality enterprise service programs and greater citizen awareness and understanding of county government. CCAO seeks to formulate and promote public policies that strengthen county government, which ultimately enhances the quality of life for residents of Ohio’s 88 counties.

The Role of County Commissioners, County Executives and County Council Members

The Office of County Commissioner is one of diverse responsibilities. County commissioners are called upon to address a multitude of issues on a daily basis, with the end goal of making their county a better place to live and work for their residents. Thus, commissioners have to master a multitude of skills to tackle the many diverse challenges they encounter while in office. In many ways, to serve as a county commissioner requires one to be a jack of all trades.

Consider the many different roles that commissioners take on. Commissioners play a role similar to that of corporate CEO by virtue of their responsibilities for local economic development, tax abatement, budgeting and land use planning. Commissioners are seen as education planners given their increasing involvement in local workforce development and job readiness programs. Commissioners take on the role of environmental technician given their statutory obligations for controlling water pollution and solid waste disposal. Or, county commissioners might at times resemble human services leaders thanks to welfare reform and the massive responsibility it places on counties to educate, train and find jobs for unemployed residents.

Simply put, county commissioners must wear many different hats – often all at the same time, each day and many evenings, 52 weeks a year.

It also should be noted that the statutory county commissioner model is not the only form of county government in Ohio. Two of Ohio’s counties, Summit and Cuyahoga, utilize a charter form of county government which features a county executive and county council. While the structure is different, the work of charter counties closely resembles that of traditional statutory counties.

For further information on the role of county commissioners, the history and different forms of county government as well as information on other county elected officials and appointed authorities, please visit https://ccao.org/wp-content/uploads/History.pdf.
County Revenue Challenges in the 21st Century

Over the past 20 years, counties have struggled to overcome major revenue challenges that threatened their ability to deliver basic services. Some of these difficulties were caused by economic downturns, but more lasting impacts have come from state and federal policy shifts that reduced county revenues. These policy decisions, such as reducing the Local Government Fund (LGF) by more than half in 2012, forced counties to become more reliant on their own local revenue sources, especially the county sales tax. The sales tax is now the single most important source of revenue for the county general fund.

The addition of $155 million in state funding for indigent defense services over the FY 2020-2021 budget biennium was a welcome reversal of the long-term trend of less state support. However, the economic slowdown brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic forced the state to pull back on a portion of this new investment. Going forward, counties will look to resume their progress in partnering with the state to ensure state resources are available to cover state-mandated services.

The table below shows total county general fund expenditures from all counties from 2007 to 2018, without adjusting for inflation (solid blue line). The 2008 spending level is shown in the dashed red line. Forty-one counties experienced a loss of general fund tax revenue between 2007 and 2013 and total spending did not reach the 2007 level until 2015. In 2018, total spending amounted to $3.2 billion, about 14.5 percent higher than in 2007. Consumer inflation rose 21 percent over the same time period.

Source: County Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports

The Impact of COVID-19

Recently, county revenues have encountered yet another fiscal headwind with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The decreased economic activity brought on by pandemic-induced business closures, elevated unemployment and contracted consumer spending translates directly to the fluctuation of multiple county revenue streams.

The sales tax, county government’s largest tax revenue source, has experienced underperformance
and fluctuation compared to state projections following the onset of the pandemic. Monthly sales tax collections beginning in March 2020 began to underperform state estimates by magnitudes of 10 to 20 percent. More recent months have shown strengthening sales tax collections, but the longer-term projections indicate potential future weakness. Underperformances in sales tax translate into weakened county sales tax distributions, although the losses will vary from county to county based on local economic factors.

Other county revenue streams have also experienced considerable weakening due to COVID-19. Counties receive approximately $100 million annually from gross casino revenue taxes. The temporary closure of Ohio’s casinos, while necessary for public health reasons, temporarily halted this revenue stream. Higher than average delinquency rates for property tax collection are anticipated due to the weakened economy, placing greater strain on county budgets and levy-funded county agencies. Counties are also experiencing diminished interest income and are anticipating decreased LGF distributions as state GRF receipts weaken. Taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel, although not directed to the county general fund, have also fallen with decreased travel, putting funding pressures on county road and bridge infrastructure.

COVID-19 is just the latest fiscal challenge that counties must endure. The resulting revenue shortfalls will lead to difficult choices for many counties: capital project delays, deferred maintenance, employee furloughs and layoffs and reducing vital services are all potential outcomes. The strength of Ohio's economic recovery from COVID-19 remains largely unknown. Future flareups and outbreaks across different regions or counties may have significant negative economic consequences for counties. While counties are optimistic for a rapid economic recovery, the lasting impact of COVID-19 will likely strain county budgets well into the future.

**County General Fund Revenue Taxes**

To provide revenue for their general fund, counties have two major options, the “piggyback” sales tax and the property tax. County government may enact a sales tax at a rate up to 1.5 percent. The tax is applied to the same products and services as the state 5.75 percent sales tax, and is added to the state rate when a consumer makes a purchase. The county rate may not exceed 1.5 percent, unless voters approve a special levy for jail construction or renovation. It should be noted that county and regional transit authorities also have the authority to levy a sales tax with a rate up to 1.5 percent. These levies are dedicated to transit purposes and are not part of the county general fund. Only counties and transit authorities have the authority to levy a local sales tax. In January 2007, 38 counties had the maximum sales tax rate of 1.5 percent. As of April 2020, 52 counties had reached the maximum rate, and sales taxes comprise over half of county general fund revenue, up from 41 percent in 2007.

County governments, like schools and other local taxing districts, may receive property taxes from both “inside” and “outside” millage levies. Most county general funds receive some share of inside millage, i.e., levies that are under the limit of 10 mills or one percent of true value. Inside millage is shared among schools and local governments and is apportioned by the county budget commission. The amount collected will rise or fall in proportion to the change in taxable property values. Counties can also ask voters to approve a property tax levy for “outside” millage for a purpose defined by state law, such as criminal justice services. A county levy for outside millage is subject to tax reduction factors in the same manner as a levy for schools or other local taxing districts. Under this mechanism, which is part of the state constitution, the amount of revenue raised by the tax is fixed at its initial level, and cannot grow unless valuation is added to the tax base through new construction.
or addition. Separately, certain county agencies governed by appointed boards (e.g., developmental disabilities; or alcohol, drug addiction, and mental health) may ask voters to approve levies. By law, the proceeds from these special purpose levies are dedicated to specific purposes and are not part of the county general fund.

**The Changing Sales Tax Base**

Although counties can control the sales and use tax rate, they do not control the “base” of the tax, in other words, the goods and services to which the tax applies. Changing technology, economic trends, and policy decisions combined to create fluctuations in the sales tax base, and create revenue shifts that are beyond counties’ control. Federal treatment of out-of-state internet sales is a key example of changing technology, business practice, and federal tax policy. As the internet grew, U.S. Supreme Court decisions in *National Bellas Hess v. Department of Revenue of Illinois* (1967) and *Quill Corp v. North Dakota* (1992) prohibited states from requiring out-of-state internet vendors to collect sales tax unless the vendor had a physical presence within the state. States lost significant amounts of revenue because consumers rarely reported use tax due on out-of-state purchases. Even though Ohio and other states partnered to create a Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement to simplify sales tax administration and compliance, Congress was unable to pass a law to address this problem.

The U.S. Supreme Court’s June 2018 decision in *South Dakota v. Wayfair* overturned the physical presence rule and allowed states to legally enforce remote vendor collection requirements. Ohio took advantage of this ruling by including a remote vendor collection requirement in the biennial budget bill passed in 2019. The law is modeled on South Dakota’s thresholds that required a vendor with $100,000 in annual sales or 200 individual transactions in Ohio to collect and remit sales tax. The law also extended the requirement to online marketplace vendors that sell products on behalf of third parties. The requirements went into effect in September 2019.

The General Assembly frequently carves out new exemptions from the sales tax. The Tax Expenditure Report officially recognized 60 distinct sales tax exceptions at the start of 2019. These laws serve a variety of purposes, such as avoiding “tax pyramiding” in the manufacturing production process, aiding charitable activities or organizations, or incentivizing certain industries. In some cases, however, narrowly-drawn carve-outs seem to show favoritism toward one specific company or interest group. However well-intentioned each of these decisions may be, they erode the sales tax base and have questionable economic value for the state as a whole. Collectively, sales tax exemptions and special carve-outs are expected to cost the State of Ohio over $6 billion in FY 2020, and will cost counties approximately $1.5 billion. CCAO strongly opposes efforts to further narrow the tax base and supports closing some existing exemptions in order to raise revenue.

When the state sales tax was created in the 1930s, it applied to the sale of tangible goods and not to services. As the modern economy shifts toward the consumption of services, the sales tax has lagged behind. Although Ohio has added some services to its tax base, such as dry cleaning and landscaping, large, growing sectors of the economy remain untaxed, such as professional services and health care. As part of a continuing effort to provide stable revenues to counties, enhance county fiscal security, and generate revenue in a fair and equitable manner from all segments of our evolving economy, CCAO supports the broadening of the state’s sales and use tax base to include additional services.

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1 The enacted budget eliminated several exemptions (e.g., investment bullion and coins, and property sold to qualified motor racing teams) but added an exemption for equipment and supplies used to clean food manufacturing equipment.
Medicaid MCO Sales Tax Temporarily Broadened Tax Base

One notable exception to the state’s reluctance to broaden the sales tax base to services was the seven-year (2010-2017) arrangement to apply the sales tax to payments made to Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). The main purpose of this framework was to provide a state match for federal Medicaid grants, but county sales taxes also applied based on the number of individuals enrolled in managed care in each county. The Medicaid MCO tax played a major role in providing revenue to counties as the economy climbed out of the Great Recession of 2008-2009. By 2016 counties received $166 million from this tax, almost 8 percent of total county sales tax revenue. In 2017, the federal government forced the state to eliminate the tax, and the state replaced it with a different Medicaid fee structure that provides no benefit to counties.

Economic and demographic trends will continue to shrink the sales tax base in the long run. Medical services, which are largely tax-exempt, will consume a growing share of consumption expenditures as the state’s population ages. As counties face growing fiscal pressure from the opiate addiction crisis and the need to improve infrastructure to stay economically competitive, they are faced with a difficult choice: either raise their sales tax rates and other taxes or cut services. As of April 2020, 52 counties used the maximum 1.5 percent sales tax rate, up from 38 in 2007 (Appendix A: Counties with maximum sales tax rate). Without major changes to the tax base and to the state’s revenue sharing policy, more counties will join this group.

Local Government Funds

The state began distributing general revenue to local governments in the 1930s when the sales tax began. Property tax revenue had collapsed because of the Great Depression, and it was obvious that both the state and local government needed an additional revenue source. Since that time, the Local Government Fund has received a designated share of state GRF taxes. Amounts are distributed to counties largely based on population. This amount is referred to as the “undivided” county LGF. Counties pass on a majority of these revenues to townships and municipalities, using either a statutory formula or a distribution procedure devised at the local level. In the aggregate, counties retain about 36% of LGF distribution, but there is a wide variation in local practice.

When the State of Ohio entered difficult fiscal times in the 21st Century, the partnership that had existed for the previous 65 years began to erode as the legislature cut or froze Local Government Fund distributions repeatedly in efforts to balance the budget. In 2000, the LGF and a related fund received $744 million, based on a statutory share of 4.8 percent of revenue from the personal income tax, corporate franchise tax, public utility excise tax, and sales and use taxes, and a smaller percentage from the newly-created Kilowatt Hour Tax.

- July 2001 to January 2008, the LGF was frozen at a set annual amount, resulting in a $644 million cumulative loss to all counties, townships, and municipalities;

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2 In 2008, the Local Government Revenue Assistance Fund was consolidated into the Local Government Fund, and a revised formula was created based on a share of total GRF taxes. Historically, a small share of the LGF has been distributed directly to municipalities.
3 The LGF received 4.2 percent of taxes from the personal income tax, corporate franchise tax, public utility excise tax, and the sales and use tax, and the LGRAF received a 0.6 percent share. Electric deregulation legislation (SB 3, effective 10-3-99) created the new Kilowatt Hour Tax (kWh), from which the LGF received 2.464% and the LGRAF received 0.378%.
• LGF was put back on a percentage of tax receipts formula (3.68 percent of state GRF taxes) from 2008 to July 2011;

• State FY 2012-2013 budget legislation reduced the LGF by roughly 50 percent over a two-year period using a new formula;

• LGF returned to a percentage of state GRF taxes formula (1.66 percent) in August 2013, which was temporarily raised to 1.68 percent during FY 2020-2021.

By 2016, the “undivided” LGF distribution amount of $343 million was less than half of the 2008 level ($699 million) after receiving a statutory 1.66 percent share of total GRF taxes. In 2008, counties retained $270 million of the LGF funds after distribution to other local governments. In 2018, this share fell to an estimated $133 million (Appendix B: Changes to the Local Government Fund).

If the LGF had continuously stayed at its former 3.68 percent share of the state General Revenue Fund, counties would retain an additional $177 million in 2020. Ohio should restore its partnership with counties and raise the LGF to its previous statutory level of 3.68 percent of the GRF taxes.

Casino Revenue

Thanks to Ohio voters, casino revenue has helped to fill some of the revenue shortfalls created by other policy changes, but the amounts are lower than expected. The Ohio Constitution permits the state to charge a 33 percent tax on gross casino revenue, which is then distributed by formula. Counties’ annual share was $107.8 million in FY 2019, but this revenue source appears to be growing very slowly. Local governments do not receive a share of racetrack video lottery terminal (“racino”) revenue, as these taxes go to education.

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4 Estimates assume that county governments would retain about 37 percent of the LGF after it is distributed with other local governments.
County Cost Structure Increases

Ohio is in the midst of an opiate addiction crisis that is tearing apart families and impacting the economy. The state experienced 3,764 unintentional drug overdose deaths in 2018, a 143% increase from the 1,544 such deaths that occurred in 2010. Appendix C displays the average overdose death rates for each county between 2013 and 2018. Exploding costs associated with the opiate epidemic are crippling justice and public safety budgets. This crisis has led to increased county costs in several areas including, but not limited to, the county jail, public defender, sheriff, coroner, and juvenile court.

In recent years, the state has made significant investments in treatment resources to combat addiction, but these efforts have had only limited effects on county costs for treatment of jail inmates. Counties continue to have a high demand for treatment in jails, but limited resources to conduct such treatment. For example, federal rules do not allow Medicaid to cover incarcerated individuals. Recent investments in substance use disorder stabilization centers and the Psychotropic Drug Reimbursement Program for county jails are helpful, but counties still rely primarily on their own limited resources.

Key Issues in Criminal Justice

The administration of justice and public safety is by far the largest area of expense for county government. In many counties, this expense exceeds 70 percent of their general fund budget.

Full funding for indigent defense reimbursement is our number one priority. We seek to build upon the significant commitment to reimbursement taken by the administration and legislature in the current state budget bill and have the state assume the full financial responsibility for funding indigent defense reimbursement in the FY 2021-2022 state budget bill.

County jails have now become de facto treatment centers. Over 70 percent of jail inmates suffer from addiction or mental health issues. Statewide, county jails exceeded their recommended capacity by approximately 20 percent in 2016, with about 38 percent of the average daily jail population being incarcerated on drug-related offenses. A state-county partnership to provide state capital funding is necessary to assist counties in meeting their obligation to provide safe and secure jail facilities and to ensure safety of their communities.

Ohio must move to a 9-1-1 system that supports digital communications and can leverage future advances in technology for emergency responders to effectively protect and efficiently respond to calls from the public for emergency assistance. The technology associated with this system is extremely expensive and cannot be borne by counties alone. This system must be adequately funded to ensure that the public’s expectations are met.

Ohio must address these key issues to ease the burden of administering this complex and crucial system.

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1. Indigent Defense and County Reimbursement

*The fundamental right to counsel is made obligatory upon the states by the fourteenth amendment.* - Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)

Indigent defense is a state responsibility. The state’s assumption of full financial responsibility for indigent defense is a critical element of a stronger state-county partnership.

For many years, Ohio opted to require that counties cover 50 percent of the costs they incurred for providing indigent defense counsel services. Beginning in 1979 and up until recently, counties had been carrying more than their 50 percent share of the burden. The state reimbursement rate has averaged 43.9 percent over the last ten years, and hit its record low of 26.1 percent in FY09. Average net county costs for providing indigent defense services across all counties from FY17 through FY20 averaged $71 million per year.

Counties recognize and appreciate that the state took significant strides in the state budget toward fully funding county reimbursement. First, the state eliminated the statutory provision prohibiting reimbursement to exceed 50%. And, second, the state increased GRF funding to a level where reimbursement was 74% during FY 2020, and prior to recent state budget cuts, was projected to be approximately 90% during FY 2021. State budget reductions implemented due to the COVID-19-induced economic slowdown have since decreased the projected FY 2021 reimbursement rate to 70%. We ask that the state take the final step in the next state budget to provide full funding for reimbursement. This would require an additional $15.4 million in FY22 and $19.4 million in FY23 in GRF funding from the appropriated FY21 funding of $125.0 million. However, only $82.6 million of the $125.0 million appropriated has been authorized for expenditure due to GRF budget expenditure reductions implemented due to COVID-19.

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**The Indigent Defense Support Fund (IDSF) is comprised of non-general fund receipts derived from surcharges on various fines and drivers’ license reinstatement fees

Factors affecting the indigent defense system:

- **General reimbursement**
  The state requires counties to provide indigent defense on its behalf to comply with the state’s constitutionally mandated obligation. The state initially chose to reimburse counties 50 percent of their costs incurred for indigent defense and utilized revenue deposited into the state general fund from a statewide court cost established by the General Assembly. However, in 1979, when
the revenue from the court cost became less than the amount required to provide the state’s 50 percent reimbursement, the state modified its funding commitment by establishing the concept of “proportional reduction” which allowed reimbursement to be below 50 percent.

During the 10-year period between FY10 and FY19 counties “covered” over $124 million in expenses that would have been reimbursed if the state had been providing 50 percent reimbursement during that time. We are pleased that the state eliminated both the concept of “proportional reduction” and the statutorily allowable maximum reimbursement rate of 50 percent in the current state budget.

- **Death penalty cases**
  Legislation passed during the 131st General Assembly gives the Capital Case Attorney Fee Council, comprised of five sitting judges of the courts of appeals, the unilateral power to establish the rate counties must pay for lawyers who represent defendants in capital (death penalty) cases. The Fee Council significantly increased the cost burden for counties by setting the rate at $125 per hour when most counties were paying around $60 to $75 per hour. As a result, counties are now confronted with an unfunded mandate for which the counties should be fully reimbursed by the state.

- **The Indigent Defense Support Fund presents challenges**
  Currently 83 percent of the non-GRF revenues that are deposited into the Indigent Defense Support Fund (IDSF) are allocated to county reimbursement. Four years ago, 88 percent used to be allocated to reimbursement. This five percent reallocation diverted approximately $6.5 million in each year from county reimbursement to support the State Public Defender’s Office operations. Furthermore, the IDSF receipts continue to underperform their three-year historic trend line upon which the budget forecast for fund receipts is based. This underperformance impacts total revenue available for reimbursement and leads to a further reduction in the reimbursement percentage to counties.

2. Capital funding for county jails should be restored

It has been 17 years since the state provided capital funding for county jail construction and renovation through the biennial capital appropriations bills. About $285 million had been provided between 1985 and 2003, averaging out to approximately $15.8 million per year. Adjusting upwards for a cumulative inflation rate of roughly 37 percent since 2003, the state would need to appropriate approximately $22 million annually to return to its previous level of capital funding committed for county jails.

The Buckeye State Sheriffs Association and CCAO conducted a jail construction needs survey last year and identified over $1,300,000,000 in current projected jail construction, renovation and maintenance costs (see Appendix D). Based upon this survey CCAO and BSSA proposed that the state allocate at least $100 million per year over a ten-year state capital funding program to help underwrite projected county jail construction costs.

There is a demonstrated demand for additional jail beds which is primarily driven by five key factors. Two are obvious: overcrowding and facility age. The other three are subtle: **felony populations, female prisoners and drug crimes.**
According to DRC data, for 2016 the average daily jail population was 20,397 which is approximately 14 percent over DRC’s recommended capacity statewide. Thirty-eight percent of the population were being held on at least one drug-related offense, and 20 percent of the population were women.

The age of county jail facilities suggests that there is a crisis upon the horizon. The general life span of a jail is between 25 to 30 years, and 32 of our 90 county jails were opened prior to 1988. Two of our county jails date back to the 1880’s and one dates back to 1800. When looking at recent construction or renovation activity, only five county jail facilities have been opened since 2000. It is clear that our county jail facilities are reaching a point where costly updates and repairs to their structural, mechanical and operating systems are going to become a necessity.

3. Universal Device Fee for 9-1-1 service

Operating a responsive 9-1-1 service is a critical matter of public safety. Ohioans experiencing emergencies should be able to make calls to 9-1-1 from any device, from any place, at any time and receive a prompt response with the call taker able to see the location from which they are calling. However, the core of Ohio’s 9-1-1 system is currently using the same call delivery technology that was in place when 9-1-1 was first introduced in 1987.

A Universal Device Fee is a permanent, statewide, uniform monthly charge against all numbers/addresses that are capable of accessing 9-1-1. A Universal Device Fee should be established to fund Ohio’s 9-1-1 system. The revenue from the fee should be utilized to adequately support both the state’s provision of a Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) call delivery operating system and local governments’ public safety answering point (PSAP) operations centers that receive those calls.

The current 25 cents per month wireless 9-1-1 fee is only applied to cell phone users. Wireline phones, phone service provided by cable companies, and various types of mobile communication devices such as voice over internet (VoIP) services that can access 9-1-1 are not contributing to supporting this expected service but should.

The Statewide Emergency Services Internet Protocol Network Steering Committee (ESINet) is tasked with moving Ohio to a Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) system that supports digital communications and can leverage future advances in technology for emergency responders to effectively protect and efficiently respond to calls from the public for emergency assistance. The technology associated with this system is extremely expensive and cannot be borne by counties alone. This system must be adequately funded to ensure that the public’s expectations are met.

Equally important to providing a Next Generation 9-1-1 call delivery system is assuring the PSAPs utilizing that system are adequately funded. The universal device fee must also support local PSAP operations. Funding allocated to the PSAP operations centers should adequately provide for the acquisition of the necessary hardware, software, and technology upgrades and annual maintenance of the system; underwrite the costs of mandatory training requirements; assist counties in completing last mile connectivity; maintain their Ohio Location Based Response System which provides address, street and location data; and effectively consolidate PSAPs.

Child Protection Challenges and Transformation

The child protection system is overwhelmed by children left in the wake of the opiate epidemic. Since 2013, we have seen a 23 percent increase in the number of kids entering foster care.
Children removed from a household dealing with addiction are remaining in the system longer and they have elevated levels of trauma and more complicated needs, causing placement costs to increase 20 percent. As county case workers watch the destruction of more and more families, the level of trauma they experience is causing a workforce shortage that places this important system in even greater peril. To adequately respond to the opiate epidemic, more foster families need to be recruited and additional support must be given to both foster and kinship families. Our child protection workforce must be reinforced by keeping caseloads down and making sure supervisors have the training and supports they need to retain qualified workers. If a long-term solution is not found that can address the strains on this system, a generation of children will be living with the aftermath.

The governor and the General Assembly recognized the need for resources in Ohio’s child protection system. In the last state operating budget, the state increased its investment in the state child protection allocation by an additional $50 million per year, bringing the total investment to $110 million per year. This recent investment in the child protection system has renewed the partnership between the state and the counties.

However, there are policy changes coming that will result in even more increased costs in the system. In 2018, Congress passed the Family First Prevention Services Act (Family First), an act that will be implemented nationwide by October 1, 2021. Through dramatic federal funding changes, Family First shifts the focus of the child welfare system to prevention – keeping children out of the foster care system and with their families – by encouraging states to support families through evidence-based programs in mental health services, substance abuse treatment and improved parenting skills. While the federal government will provide a 50% match for funding these programs, the other 50% of the cost will fall to the states. This is a transformational change that will also require a shift in practice and training at the county level.

As these changes are implemented in Ohio, it is important to remember that counties still fund the largest share of the expenses in the child welfare system with county general fund dollars and dedicated levies (53 of the 88 counties have children services levies). Passing on the costs of these transformations in the system would once again leave counties struggling to support the system financially. Ohio must help its county partners pay for the federal match for these prevention services in addition to maintaining its current investment in children services.

Board of Elections

Counties have become alarmed by the dramatic growth in costs associated with conducting elections. State leaders should oppose unfunded election mandates and address the growing costs associated with recent reforms by establishing a line item in the state budget to fully finance the cost of these reforms.

Another election expense is an increase in public records requests when election boards are preparing for and conducting elections. There should be discussions about the growing demand for public records in boards of elections offices just prior to Election Day and ways to mitigate the growing strains and expenses while responding to the public in a timely, positive manner.

CCAO also supports potential cost-saving measures such as a reduction in polling locations and limits on the number of back-up paper ballots required with electronic voting equipment.
Economic Development, Infrastructure & Workforce

An employer’s decision to locate a business is often driven by the quality of life and services that a community offers its residents, and counties are actively involved in creating environments that are attractive to employers. Police, fire and EMS services, schools, parks and recreation activities are the visible attributes of a community’s quality of life, but the public infrastructure under the surface is equally critical. Safe and sanitary water and sewer systems; dependable power and broadband services; modern, well maintained roads; a job ready workforce and thriving small businesses are all part of what it takes to support Ohio’s job creation efforts. Maintaining these systems is a huge undertaking, costing billions of dollars each year and funding has not kept pace with needs.

How can Ohio partner with counties to create a job friendly environment?

Access to Broadband

According to a 2017 Ohio State University study (Connecting the Dots of Ohio’s Broadband Policy, OSU Swank Program in Rural-Urban Policy), more than one million Ohioans lack access to broadband services in their homes. This unserved population largely lives in rural regions of the state where it is too expensive for internet service providers to extend service. This lack of service restricts these Ohioans from access to electronic commerce, telehealth services, virtual educational opportunities and other offerings of the 21st century economy. Expanding broadband service to all Ohioans will be a critical component to ensuring Ohio’s future economic competitiveness.

The DeWine administration and the General Assembly have taken positive steps toward addressing Ohio’s broadband challenges. In late 2019, the administration released Ohio’s first-ever broadband strategy outlining Ohio’s challenges and opportunities in expanding broadband services. One product of that strategy was the recent establishment of BroadbandOhio, an office dedicated toward improving high speed internet access across the state. Furthermore, legislation like House Bill 13, which would provide competitive state grants for residential broadband expansion projects, also marks an important step in expanding residential broadband service.

Ensuring that no Ohioan lacks access to broadband is a goal that will not be met overnight. State lawmakers can make meaningful progress toward this goal though through continued support and investment into broadband expansion efforts. Ohio cannot expect to fully prosper when one million of its residents remain excluded from this critical service.

Water and Sewer Funding

Ohio, like much of the country, is facing massive water and sewer infrastructure upgrades. The water crisis in Flint, Michigan, and the lead contamination tragedy in Sebring, Ohio, illustrated the challenges that our aging infrastructure is facing to adequately provide quality drinking water for both our citizens and businesses.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released its water quality report to Congress that says that more than $14.5 billion is needed to fully fund storm water and waste water projects in Ohio over the next 20 years. Over half of this cost is needed to prevent or control mixed storm water and untreated waste water from discharging into water systems – the second highest of all states. Drinking water projects require $12.2 billion over 20 years, not including any potential replacement of lead supply lines.
Project costs for new construction and repair or maintenance of our water and sewer infrastructure far exceed the financial capacity of counties and local governments to incur these obligations. Together, the state and counties must find ways to address this challenge and facilitate payment of these project costs. Counties ask the state to consider allocating public works bonding capacity to these projects, re-establish the Ohio water and sewer rotary commission and provide significantly greater funding support including more matching grants for governments and citizens confronted with EPA orders to install water and sewer systems.

Finally, maintaining connection requirements for on-lot septic systems is crucial to ensuring the financial of sanitary sewer projects under construction today or planned for the future. CCAO requests that the state maintains this public health policy, while giving counties the discretion to authorize temporary, non-renewable exceptions for septic systems that are new and in good working condition. In 1984, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled in DeMoise v. Dowell, that “individual household sewage disposal systems are inherently more dangerous to the public health than sanitary sewerage systems and must be replaced when possible.”

**Workforce**

One of the biggest assets a community can offer employers is a qualified, job-ready workforce. County government in Ohio has played a critical role in local economic development initiatives and implementing human services programs aimed at helping residents obtain, maintain or improve their employment. Tools that counties utilize in this task include the federal workforce program known as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and strong partnerships with the state’s OhioMeansJobs centers. Some counties also use dollars from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, delivered through the county JFS, to invest in the local workforce infrastructure.

Ohio should avoid a one-size-fits-all approach to workforce development policy. The success of county-level workforce development programs is dependent on the degree to which those programs are employer-led and employer-centric at the local level. As Ohio develops workforce development success measures and programming, we urge a comprehensive look at best practices driving success at the local level. One-stops and workforce investment areas must continue to have the flexibility to partner with different counties and areas who fall outside arbitrary, bureaucratic boundaries and instead work across systems to meet both local and regional needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically affected workers and businesses across Ohio. As the state emerges from this crisis, medium and small businesses will need support in hiring and training new workers or upskilling returning workers. Likewise, jobseekers who were displaced due to COVID-19 will require job skills training before new employment. The workforce system in Ohio would benefit from flexible funding to assist both businesses and supportive services for jobseekers laid off due to the pandemic.

**Water Quality**

All Ohioans are dependent upon safe and clean water supplies. Lake Erie, the Ohio River and points in between have all dealt with water quality challenges in recent years. These challenges have been brought on by a number of factors, including agricultural runoff, changing weather patterns, wastewater treatment plants, combined sewer overflows, failing home sewage treatment systems, and others. These factors combine to form harmful algal blooms which threaten drinking water supplies and greatly impact the tourism and recreation industries.
Ohio made a significant investment in water quality improvement through the establishment of the H2Ohio Fund. This program makes critical investments into proven agricultural best management practices and equipment, expands and rebuilds wetlands, and modernizes drinking water infrastructure. This program deserves continued support from the General Assembly.

As part of ensuring water quality, there must also be trusted experts on the ground working with agricultural producers to provide the latest data and insights into water quality challenges. Continued state support for County Soil and Water Conservation Districts and OSU Extension allows for these boots on the ground and their supporting research to reach producers on an individual level.
County Government Reform

A fresh look at how county and state government can re-invent and strengthen their partnership to provide services to Ohioans is needed. Counties are a creature of the state for the execution of state policies and have only the powers granted to them by the state. Ohio’s counties’ structure and the responsibilities that they are asked to perform should be re-examined to see if some functions and responsibilities should be realigned and if greater efficiencies can be achieved.

Budgetary Control

CCAO asks policymakers to provide boards of county commissioners with much needed budgetary tools to more efficiently manage taxpayer dollars and special funds, particularly in times of fiscal distress:

• Use of special funds during fiscal distress and use of interest. Consistent with the authority of state government to divert money from certain special revenue funds to the state general revenue fund during periods of significant fiscal stress and to provide for the most efficient use of county resources, CCAO supports similar authority for county commissioners to divert money in special funds to the county general fund.

Such authority should be exercised in accordance with all of the following: (1) not apply to funds comprised of voted property tax levies for specific purposes or to the real estate assessment fund; (2) be done pursuant to a resolution of the board after public notice to other elected officials and the public as well as a public hearing; (3) assure that adequate monies remain in the special fund to meet any specific statutory mandate; and (4) be authorized through a resolution that applies only to the current fiscal year.

CCAO generally opposes the creation of special funds as they can inhibit the ability to set overall priorities. In regards to certain existing special funds, CCAO requests that a board of county commissioners be able to access certain revenues in special funds if a county is in fiscal distress and resources available to the commissioners are exhausted.

• Limitations on salary appropriations for selected county entities. CCAO urges the General Assembly to limit the authority of the courts, the prosecutor, the board of elections and the veterans’ service commission to require the board of county commissioners to appropriate to their offices a total amount for salaries which exceeds the average annual percentage amounts approved by the commissioners for the other county elected officials’ staff salaries.

County commissioners generally possess the authority to limit the aggregate amount of funds to be used for salary purposes in the various county offices through the county appropriation process. This modification would not change the autonomy enjoyed by elected officials over the individual compensation of their employees but simply restrict spending to no more than the total appropriated by the commissioners.

One of the main functions of the board of county commissioners is to serve as the taxing authority of the county and exercise general control over county finance. The board levies taxes and special assessments, adopts the annual budget and makes appropriations. It also authorizes the borrowing of money and issues bonds. Practically, contracts to which the county is a party must be authorized and executed by it. Most purchases either require the approval of the board or are made by it directly.
It is a sound principle of finance that the control of expenditures should rest with the body responsible for raising the funds. The board of commissioners is the proper body to determine the relative need of the various agencies and activities and to keep the county budget in balance.

Veterans Service Commissions

CCAO supports initiatives to review the law and operation of county Veteran Service Commissions to be sure enhanced and coordinated services are available to our brave men and women of the armed services returning home. The mandate contained in ORC Section 5901.11 to fund the Veterans Service Commission at a level of up to five-tenths of a mil per dollar on the assessed value of the property of the county should be studied by the Department of Veteran Services in an effort to identify alternative funding options to replace current county funding.

The current mandate is for unvoted “inside millage.” One option would be to allow voters to replace the current mandate with an outside millage property tax levy. Over time voters, could adjust the amount raised by the levy based on the needs of veterans in the county. This would ensure accountability to voters in the same manner as any other levy-funded service.

We support the enhanced ability for the boards of county commissioners to review and revise the budget of the Veterans Service Commission, especially as it pertains to the administrative and operational expenses of the Commission. As it relates to operational expenses, there is a special need to be sure that the Veterans Service Commission does not have the authority to provide for staff compensation increases that exceed the average increase provided to other appointing authorities through the appropriation process. Additional checks and balances are needed to ensure that needy veterans are receiving essential financial assistance and other services in a cost efficient and responsible manner that fully utilizes other health, human service and employment programs. The Department of Veteran Services should provide funding for any training that is mandated by the department. To ensure stronger oversight of this statutorily dedicated county funding, boards of county commissioners should become the appointing authority for members of Veteran Service Commissions.

Repealing Outdated Health Mandates

1. County Assessments for State Administered Programs

The Department of Health currently has the authority to require counties to withhold inside millage in order to pay for programs run through the Ohio Department of Health’s Bureau for Children with Medical Handicaps (BCMH). ODH Line item 440607, Medically Handicapped Children – County Assessments, supports the Children with Medical Handicaps Program and is to be used to pay for treatment services rendered on behalf of children not covered by federal funds or Medicaid. These assessments against counties are estimated to be $24 million in state fiscal year 2021. This state administered public health program should be funded by state revenue sources.

2. Tuberculosis Treatment Costs

County commissioners have an antiquated statutory duty to pay for treatment and detention costs for those afflicted with tuberculosis (TB). In the past, the Ohio Department of Health has made funds available to counties for cases that completed treatment. Help from the state is appreciated, however, with an average of 163 active TB cases each year, the cost can range from several thousand to well
over $100,000 per case. Counties need relief from this outdated mandate, and the state should either fully fund this duty or put the responsibility in a more logical place.

3. County Health Department Office Space

Office space costs of general health districts should become operating costs of the district in the same way such costs are classified in combined health districts. In addition, the use of voted health levies to fund office space costs should be specifically authorized. It would provide an additional means to eliminate the unfunded mandate on the county general fund, since counties are not required to provide money for health departments’ operating budgets.
Counties with Maximum Sales Tax Rates
April 2020

52 counties have the maximum sales tax rate of 1.5 percent
Appendix B: Changes to the Local Government Fund

LGF Distributions Retained by County Governments
CY 2008 - 2019

Source: Ohio Department of Taxation, Table LG-3
Appendix C: Average Age-Adjusted Unintentional Drug Overdose Death Rate Per 100,000 Population, by County, 2013-2018

Source: Ohio Department of Health
Dear Governor DeWine:

CAPITAL FUNDING REQUEST

The Buckeye State Sheriffs Association (BSSA) and the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) seek a commitment from the state to partner with its counties to ensure that Ohio’s county jails are positioned to more effectively maintain the safety and security of their employees and those incarcerated while protecting the communities they serve.

We respectfully ask that you consider providing a state funding partnership in the upcoming SFY 2021/2022 Capital Appropriations legislation to assist counties with funding the construction, expansion, renovation and repair of county jail facilities.

We ask that this state funding partnership include an initial investment of $200,000,000 in the SFY 2021/2022 Capital Appropriations legislation and that a similar amount of funding be provided in each of the next five capital appropriations bills, providing a total of $1,000,000,000 over the next ten year period to assist counties with funding the construction, expansion, renovation and repair of their county jail facilities.

SURVEY DATA

At the request of your office we have compiled and provide to you the proposals for capital funding assistance which have been submitted by our counties and regional jail facilities. Please note the following:

- Requests were received from 44 counties and the 4 regional jails.
- Total amount of funding requests exceeds $1,390,000,000.
- Seventeen counties are seeking to construct new jail facilities.
  - These counties’ estimated construction costs exceed $1,030,000,000.
- Thirty-one counties are seeking funding for expansions, renovation or repair of their existing jail facilities.
  - Estimated construction costs for these projects exceeds $350,000,000.
We believe that this data strongly supports and necessitates the establishment of a state/county partnership to provide state capital funding to assist counties in meeting their obligation to provide safe and secure jail facilities and to ensure safety of their communities.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to exploring the development of this capital funding program with your administration and the General Assembly.

Sincerely,

Bob Cornwell     John Leutz, Esq.
Executive Director     Legislative Counsel
Buckeye State Sheriffs Association     County Commissioners Association of Ohio

Enclosures:

- “Effective Jail Management is at Risk” – Program Justification
- County Funding Requests (Excel Spreadsheet)
- Individual county project narratives (Word and PDF documents – only on flash drive)
- Graphics:
  - Counties Requesting Funding for Jail Projects
  - Counties Requesting Funding to Construct a New Jail
  - Counties Requesting Funding to Expand or Renovate Their Current Jail
  - Counties Requesting Funding for Physical Plant Repair

CCs: Michael Hall, Director of Policy
    Brenton Temple, Assistant Policy Director
    Andy Wilson, Senior Advisor for Criminal justice Policy
EFFECTIVE JAIL MANAGEMENT IS AT RISK

The ability of the county jail to perform its mission within the criminal justice system is currently jeopardized by four key factors:

- Our county jail facilities are aging.
- Our jails serve the inappropriate role of “de facto” mental health and addiction facilities
- Our jails are challenged by the increasing female inmate population.
- Demand for beds that is outpacing current capacity.

These challenges to the county jail mission are compromising our ability to effectively manage and allocate sufficient resources to our jails.

Between sixty and seventy percent of our counties’ general fund budgets are allocated to criminal justice. Operation of the jail alone is consuming between twenty-five and thirty percent of our general fund budgets.

Ohio’s county jails by their nature are faced with continued costly updates and repairs to the structural, mechanical and operating systems in order to provide a safe and secure facility that is capable of addressing and managing the challenges of the inmate population.

Facility fatigue will require a substantial capital investment for jail construction, expansion and renovation. The age of county jail facilities suggests that there is a crisis on the horizon. The general life span of a jail is between 25 to 30 years, and 32 of our 90 county jails were opened prior to 1988. County jail facilities are reaching a point where costly updates and repairs to their structural mechanical and operating systems are going to become a necessity. In 2018, our jails housed an average daily jail population of 20,310. This population exceeds Department of Rehabilitation and Correction recommended capacity figures by approximately 8 percent.

The Bureau of Adult Detention is aware of serious operational issues being experienced by some jails that could possibly be resolved through either a significant investment in their current facility or construction of a new facility. We understand that several jails are unable to currently meet the Ohio Minimum Jail Standards due to the limitations of their facilities.

Furthermore, in order to effectively address today’s criminal justice population, facilities must adapt to new designs that are focused on housing and managing the mentally ill, those with substance use disorder and the increasing female population.

A state/county partnership providing state capital dollars to counties to assist them with construction, expansion, renovation and repair of their county jail facilities to meet these challenges is an important first step in helping our counties to mitigate the risk confronting county jail management.
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APPENDIX E: CCAO Leadership

2020 CCAO Executive Committee

President – Carl Davis, Monroe County Commissioner
1st Vice President – Tim Bubb, Licking County Commissioner
2nd Vice President – Deborah Lieberman, Montgomery County Commissioner
Secretary – Lori Kokoski, Lorain County Commissioner
Treasurer – Tom Whiston, Morrow County Commissioner
Past President – Julie Ehemann, Shelby County Commissioner
Member – Mike Halleck, Columbiana County Commissioner

2020 CCAO Board of Directors

Chris Abbuhl, Tuscarawas County Commissioner
Dick Gould, Greene County Commissioner
Ron Amstutz, Wayne County Commissioner
DeAnna Holliday, Lawrence County Commissioner
Tony Anderson, Fayette County Commissioner
Edwin Humphrey, Clermont County Commissioner
Terry Booze, Huron County Commissioner
Shannon Jones, Warren County Commissioner
Armond Budish, Cuyahoga County Executive
Casey Kozlowski, Ashtabula County Commissioner
Mike Crabtree, Scioto County Commissioner
Ryan Mack, Defiance County Commissioner
Doug Corcoran, Ross County Commissioner
Gary Merrell, Delaware County Commissioner
Christopher Day, Preble County Commissioner
Glenn Miller, Henry County Commissioner
Denise Driehaus, Hamilton County Commissioner
John O’Grady, Franklin County Commissioner
Lenny Eliason, Athens County Commissioner
Matt Old, Erie County Commissioner
Jeffrey Fix, Fairfield County Commissioner
Paula Prentice, Summit County Council Member
Patricia Geissman, Medina County Commissioner
Randy Smith, Meigs County Commissioner
Pete Gerken, Lucas County Commissioner
Brian Stewart, Pickaway County Commissioner
Thomas Graham, Jefferson County Commissioner
Doug Weisenauer, Crawford County Commissioner