



STATEHOUSE REPORT

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CCAO submits testimony opposing residential development exemption bill

The House Ways and Means Committee held a fourth hearing on legislation ([HB 371](#)) which would exempt from property taxation the increased value of land subdivided for residential development until construction commences or the land is sold. CCAO Managing Director of Research Brad Cole submitted written testimony opposing the bill. CCAO cited the following reasons in opposing the bill:

- HB 371 deviates from the long-standing practice of county auditors valuing land according to true or fair market value. The bill could have unintended and unpredictable consequences on the value of neighboring parcels. The bill also exempts street and utility improvements from any valuation adjustments until the property is sold.
- The Legislative Service Commission fiscal note indicated that the revenue loss from the bill could be substantial and might amount to millions of dollars in counties with the greatest residential building activity.
- For certain types of levies that are intended to generate fixed sums of revenue, the legislation may have the practical effect of increasing the level of taxes for certain property owners so that other property owners may pay less.

CCAO also issued a [Legislative Alert](#) encouraging commissioners to contact members of the House Ways and Means Committee and legislative leadership to express opposition to HB 371. Representative Derek Merrin (R-Monclova Township) who is the sponsor of HB 371 offered two substantive amendments to the bill. The amendments would:

- Places a ten-year limit on the period-of-time that residential lots would be exempted from full valuation. Residential lots would be exempted until the earlier of 10 years or whenever a residential lot is sold or residential construction begins.

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- Clarifies that residential lots would not be valued at the county agricultural use valuation (CAUV) but instead would be valued at the “nonagricultural taxable value.”

A fifth hearing on HB 371 is scheduled by the House Ways and Means Committee on the morning of Tuesday, December 12th and amendments are expected to be considered, however, no vote to report the bill from committee is planned.

CCAO thanks commissioners, county council members and county executives for reaching out to the committee on this legislation!

If you have questions please contact CCAO staffer [Brad Cole](#) at 614-220-7981.

Hearings continue on local government property tax complaint legislation (HB 343)



Rep. Merrin

The House Ways and Means Committee took additional opponent testimony from school districts and other local governments while the committee and prime sponsor Representative Derek Merrin (R-Monclova Township) discussed various amendments to address some concerns being raised about the bill. CCAO previously testified in opposition to [HB 343](#).

The underlying bill requires a school board or the legislative authority of a county, municipal corporation or township, before filing a property tax complaint or counter complaint, to pass a separate resolution for each parcel approving the complaint or counter-complaint at a public meeting. It also requires a separate notice be provided to the property owner prior to the legislative body acting on the complaint.

Representative Merrin briefed the committee on three amendments that he said would alleviate concerns raised by stakeholders:

- One amendment would base notification requirements on ownership versus a per parcel standard.
- Notifications could be by regular or certified mail.
- Valuation challenges could continue in cases in which property owners were misidentified in the paperwork. This last item is intended to conform to legislation adopted within the past year that prohibits the dismissal of a property tax complaint by the board of revision for failure to correctly identify the property owner.

Separately, Representative Merrin has had a substitute bill drafted which would:

- Prohibit local governments from filing original complaints to contest residential property values. Local governments could continue to file original complaints against commercial, industrial and agricultural properties.

- Local governments could file counter complaints against residential property, but only if the property owner was requesting a valuation reduction of \$100,000 or more.
- County auditors would have to notify local governments when complaints were filed to lower residential property values by \$100,000 or more.
- Local governments would not have to pass any resolution or provide any additional notification for residential counter complaints.

For commercial, industrial and agricultural complaints the substitute bill would:

- Require local governments to pass a resolution to authorize filing complaints regarding commercial, industrial and agricultural property, however one resolution could cover multiple complaints.
- Local governments would not be required to provide any additional notification to property owners.
- Technical mistakes in a resolution would not invalidate complaints by local governments.
- The same as residential complaints, local governments can only file commercial, industrial and agricultural counter complaints if the property owner is seeking a reduction in value of \$100,000 or more.

Lastly, the substitute bill would require a written notice on all complaints requesting to reduce the property value by \$100,000 or more indicating that school districts have a right to file a counter-complaint.

HB 343 is scheduled for a fifth hearing before the House Ways and Means Committee on the morning of Tuesday, December 12th and amendments will be considered but no vote to report the bill from committee is planned.

If you have questions please contact CCAO staffer [Brad Cole](#) at 614-220-7981.

Unemployment comp bill may move out of the House soon

[HB 382](#), sponsored by Rep. Kirk Schuring (R-Canton), is the latest attempt to revamp Ohio's unemployment compensation program. Rep. Schuring chaired the working group that was tasked with finding a way to achieve long term solvency for the fund

The bill puts in place a 10-year benefit freeze that would end in 2029, increases the premium wage base to \$11,000, limits benefits to 24 weeks (26 weeks if the unemployment is caused by weather) and requires employees to pay co-insurance once they have satisfied the monetary requirements necessary to receive unemployment benefits.



Rep. Schuring

Language in the bill requires all employers to provide a notice to prospective employees about what their co-insurance payment will be. To do this, reimbursing employers will need to divide the reimbursements made by the employer to the fund during the previous calendar year by their current number of employees. Each employee's payment will be equal to 10% of that amount. According to the bill, employers will withhold co-insurance payments from an employee's pay and remit them to the Director of Job and Family Services.

Speaker of the House Cliff Rosenberger (R-Clarksville) has said that they plan to move the bill out of committee next week and vote it out of the House in January.

If you'd like to know more, please contact CCAO staffer [Kate Neithammer](#) at 614-220-7996.

Data sharing bill could help county family service agencies



Rep. Young

This week the House Community and Family Advancement Committee accepted a sub bill for [HB 340](#), sponsored by Rep. Ron Young (R-Leroy Township). The bill was conceived as a way to help county case workers working at local jfs, child support, children services and workforce agencies use technology to better serve their clients and work more efficiently.

Currently, even though many of these programs are serving the same clients, each has a separate database and the systems are not set up in a way that allows workers to share information electronically. HB 340 would allow workers to view each other's data so that they could keep up to date on changes in the system and have access to important information that may affect that case. The CCAO Board of Directors voted recently to support this legislation.

Also supporting the legislation is the Jobs and Family Services Directors Association (JFSDA), the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) and Ohio Child Support Enforcement Agency Directors Association (OCDA).

At a prior meeting of the committee Joel Potts, Executive Director of JFSDA, and Amy Roehrenbeck, Executive Director of OCDA described the challenge facing their workers. Potts explained, "It is a regular occurrence for clients to be involved in multiple programs and to have information in many of these systems. It is equally common for caseworkers to need to access information for client services and need access to the information included in these systems. Unfortunately, in most cases the caseworker cannot utilize the computer at their desk to easily look up, verify or utilize the information available in our own systems."

Angela Sausser, Executive Director of PCSAO highlighted another concern caused by the lack of access to information in her testimony saying, "Consider, for example, a diabetic child who is dependent on insulin and is removed from the home because of imminent danger. The PCSA has no way of knowing the child requires insulin if the parent does not share that information, putting the child at medical risk."

You can read testimony from all three [here](#).

CCAO policy staffer, Kate Neithammer submitted proponent testimony to the committee which you can read [here](#).

The substitute version includes the following changes:

- Includes child support enforcement agencies in the definition of "county agencies" so that child support can share information with those programs.
- States departments of job and family services and county agencies are permitted to provide access to information to other county agencies rather than required to "release" or "disclose" that information.
- Removes a provision making it a felony to improperly disclose information for subsequent offenses, retaining current law that it is a first degree misdemeanor.
- Removes the requirement of a written paper form prior to releasing information to other county agencies.
- Retains agency discretion to allow sharing information in a manner permissible under federal law but requires the agencies to seek an attorney general's opinion, to be shared with the General Assembly, if that request is denied.

If you have any questions about this legislation please reach out to [Kate Neithammer](#) at 614-220-7996.

State tax revenue holding steady

We are approaching the halfway point of Fiscal Year 2018 and the state's tax intake is still slightly ahead of estimates. The latest preliminary revenue data from the Office of Budget and Management found both of the main tax categories - sales and income - beating expectations, and overall tax collections running just above the target through the first five months of the fiscal year.

The total for tax receipts in November, at \$1.896 billion, was \$8.7 million, or 0.5%, ahead of schedule, OBM reported. For the year to date, the \$9 billion tax intake is about \$29 million, or 0.3%, in the black.

Both the sales and income tax categories came in over estimates for the month in the 2% range, and the auto sales tax is especially strong compared to projections for the year to date, the latest data show. So far this year, the \$594 million in auto sales tax collections is \$24 million, or 4.2%, ahead of OBM's target.

In the personal income tax, the main culprit for the underages last year, the \$652 million intake for November was \$11.7 million, or 1.8%, above estimates, the state reported. Thus far in FY 2018 the \$3.36 billion PIT total is \$28 million, or 0.8%, ahead of projections.



Legislative schedules for 2018

Both the House and the Senate have released their schedules for the first half of 2018.

The House has 13 firm session dates on the calendar between now and June plus quite a few “if needed” dates. View House [calendar](#).

The Senate has 11 dates on the calendar plus additional “if needed” dates as well. View Senate [calendar](#).

ETC...

Republicans voted 22-0 to appoint Rep. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) to the 1st Senate District seat vacated by Sen. Cliff Hite.

Rep. Bill Reineke (R-Tiffin) was unanimously elected to fill the House assistant majority whip position left open by the departure of McColley.

Sen. President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) appointed Sen. Bob Hackett (R-London) to chair the Senate Agriculture Committee.

The state reminded employers this week that the minimum wage is set to rise on Jan. 1 to \$8.30 per hour for non-tipped employees and to \$4.15 per hour for tipped employees. The current rates are \$8.15 and \$4.08, respectively.

Hearing Schedule



TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12

[House Finance](#) ([Testimony & Documents](#))

(Chr. [Smith, R.](#), [\(614\) 466-1366](#)), Rm. 313, 9:00 am [Add to Calendar](#)

HB 3

Track

DATAOHIO BOARD ([DUFFEY, M.](#), [HAGAN, C.](#))

To create the DataOhio Board, to specify requirements for posting public records online, to require the Auditor of State to adopt rules regarding a uniform accounting system for public offices, to establish an online catalog of public data at data.Ohio.gov, to establish the Local Government Information Exchange Grant Program, and to make appropriations. --3rd Hearing-All testimony-Possible vote

HB 281

Track

BROADBAND EXPANSION ([CARFAGNA, R.](#))

To establish the residential broadband expansion program within the Development Services Agency to award matching grants for last mile broadband expansion in municipal corporations and townships and to make an appropriation. --**3rd Hearing-All testimony-Possible substitute**

HB 378

Track

BROADBAND GRANTS ([SMITH, R.](#), [CERA, J.](#))

To create the Ohio Broadband Development Grant Program and to make an appropriation. --**2nd Hearing-Proponent**

[House Ways & Means](#) ([Testimony & Documents](#))

(Chr. [Schaffer, T.](#), (614) 466-8100), Rm. 121, 9:00 am [Add to Calendar](#)

HB 343

Tracked

PROPERTY VALUES ([MERRIN, D.](#))

To require local governments that contest property values to formally pass an authorizing resolution for each contest and to notify property owners. --**5th Hearing-Possible amendments**

HB 371

Tracked

PROPERTY TAX ([MERRIN, D.](#))

To exempt from property taxation the increased value of land subdivided for residential development until construction commences or the land is sold. --**5th Hearing-Possible amendments**

[Senate Judiciary](#) ([Testimony & Documents](#))

(Chr. [Bacon, K.](#), (614) 466-8064), North Hearing Rm., 10:15 am [Add to Calendar](#)

HB 215

Track

PAULDING COURTS ([RIEDEL, C.](#))

To create the Paulding County Municipal Court in Paulding on January 1, 2019, to establish one full-time judgeship in that court, to provide for the nomination of the judge by petition only, to abolish the Paulding County County Court on that date, to designate the Paulding County Clerk of Courts as the clerk of the Paulding County Municipal Court, and to provide for the election for the Paulding County Municipal Court of one full-time judge in 2018. --**3rd Hearing-All testimony-Possible vote**

SB 158

Track

ELDER FRAUD ([WILSON, S.](#))

To develop best practices and educational opportunities to combat elder fraud and exploitation and to fine and require full restitution from offenders who are found guilty of certain fraud-related crimes against the elderly. --**5th Hearing-All testimony-Possible vote**

SB 180

Track

FIREARM LAWS ([UECKER, J.](#), [HOTTINGER, J.](#))

To assign to the prosecution the burden of disproving a self-defense or related claim, to expand the locations at which a person has no duty to retreat before using force under both civil and criminal law, and to modify the Concealed Handgun Licensing Law regarding a licensee's duty to keep the licensee's hands in plain sight, the penalties for illegally carrying a concealed firearm or improperly handling firearms in a motor vehicle, and the posting of warning signs regarding the possession of weapons on specified premises. --**3rd Hearing-All testimony**

HB 79

Track

FIREARMS TRAINING ([RETFERFORD, W.](#), [HAGAN, C.](#))

To provide for firearms training for tactical medical professionals; to permit such a professional who has received that training and has been authorized by the law enforcement agency to carry firearms while on duty; and to grant such a professional the same right to carry a concealed handgun in this state as a concealed handgun licensee. --**2nd Hearing-Proponent**

[House State & Local Government](#) ([Testimony & Documents](#))

HB 415

Track

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS ([GREENSPAN, D.](#), [RYAN, S.](#))

To allocate one-half of any surplus revenue to a new Local Government Road Improvement Fund, from which money will be distributed directly to local governments to fund road improvements. --**2nd Hearing-All testimony**

HB 298

Track

SICK DAYS ([MERRIN, D.](#))

To make changes with respect to the number of sick days provided to public employees. --**1st Hearing-Sponsor**

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

[Senate Ways & Means](#) (Testimony & Documents)

(Chr. [Eklund, J.](#), (614) 644-7718), South Hearing Rm., 9:00 am [Add to Calendar](#)

HB 69

Track

TIF DISTRICTS ([CUPP, R.](#))

To require reimbursement of certain township fire and emergency medical service levy revenue forgone because of the creation of a municipal tax increment financing district. --7th Hearing-All testimony-Possible amendments & vote

[Senate Transportation, Commerce & Workforce](#) (Testimony & Documents)

(Chr. [LaRose, F.](#), (614) 466-4823), South Hearing Rm., 10:15 am [Add to Calendar](#)

HB 10

Tracked

CROWDFUNDING ([ARNDT, S.](#))

To permit intrastate equity crowdfunding under certain circumstances. --2nd Hearing-Possible amendments & vote

[House Session](#)

(Chr. [Rosenberger, C.](#), (614) 466-3357), House Chamber, 1:30 pm [Add to Calendar](#)

[Senate Session](#)

(Chr. [Obhof, L.](#), (614) 466-4900), Senate Chamber, 1:30 pm [Add to Calendar](#)