



House Local Government Committee

House Bill 154

**Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA)
Buckeye Association of School Administrators (BASA)
Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO)**

May 7, 2025

Chair King, Vice Chair Kishman, Ranking Member Sims, and members of the House Local Government Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill (HB) 154. My name is Malania Birney with the Ohio School Boards Association. With me today is Dr. Paul Imhoff from the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and Kaite Johnson with the Ohio Association of School Business Officials. Collectively, our organizations represent Ohio's public school board members, superintendents, treasurers/CFOs, and other school business officials from across the state.

House Bill 154 proposes a thoughtful update to Ohio's Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) program by extending the requirement for school district approval of property tax exemptions above 75% to include residential developments. Under current law, school districts play an important role in reviewing CRA exemptions for commercial and industrial projects when the exemption exceeds 75%. However, residential CRA exemptions do not currently require school district input, even though they impact the local tax base that supports educational services.

This lack of alignment can have practical consequences:

- School districts are not reimbursed or consulted, even when residential CRA exemptions significantly impact local revenue.
- In many fast-growing communities, the cost of educating new students associated with residential development is not offset by additional tax revenue, often requiring new or increased levies to bridge the gap.
- Without school district input, long-term fiscal planning becomes more challenging, particularly in areas experiencing rapid residential growth.

By extending the existing approval process to residential CRA exemptions, HB 154 ensures that school boards have a voice in decisions that directly affect their ability to serve students. Importantly, the bill maintains flexibility by preserving current exceptions for waived approval and "hold harmless" compensation agreements—enabling continued collaboration between local governments, developers, and schools.



We urge your support for House Bill 154 to protect the integrity of Ohio's school funding system and promote responsible, community-centered economic development.

Chair King and member of the committee, thank you for your consideration. We would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.