



House Ways and Means Committee  
House Bill 186 Opponent Testimony  
Buckeye Association of School Administrators  
Ohio School Boards Association  
Ohio Association of School Business Officials

October 1, 2025

Chairman Roemer, Vice Chairman Thomas, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Substitute House Bill (HB) 186. My name is Paul Imhoff with the Buckeye Association of School Administrators, which represents Ohio's public school superintendents. Joining me in support of this testimony is Nicole Piscitani with the Ohio School Boards Association and Katie Johnson with the Ohio Association of School Business Officials. On behalf of our members, we appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective on the new changes to HB 186.

We want to begin our testimony by acknowledging the seriousness of the property tax issue in Ohio right now and reaffirm our commitment to work with the General Assembly to craft responsible solutions to this complex issue. Our members know this is a complicated topic, and we have been on record supporting various reforms that address the property tax crisis and provide relief to Ohioans who need it most.

The original version of HB 186 was one of those fundamental reforms. A mechanism that places an inflationary cap on the property tax revenue 20-mill floor school districts receive following a reappraisal or update, HB 186 in its original form was a defensible and reasonable proposal that, had it been enacted sooner, would have prevented the property tax crisis in which we currently find ourselves.

However, the new substitute bill's retroactive provisions turn it into a sudden, retroactive cut of hundreds of millions of dollars in already-collected and budgeted funds. While the original bill limited future property tax revenue growth for some districts – referred to by some as a decrease on the increase – the substitute bill retroactively cuts hundreds of millions of dollars in

already collected and budgeted funds for a majority of Ohio school districts. According to data from the Legislative Service Commission:

- In the first year, more than half of Ohio school districts – 308 in total – will lose \$226.4 million compared to what they receive today.
- In the following year, 191 districts will still be \$94.4 million below their current property tax revenue levels.
- By the third year, one in five districts – 126 in total – will still be generating less property tax revenue than today, totaling \$39.7 million.

Several school systems will see their carryover balances cut in half or depleted entirely, which will jeopardize their credit ratings, increase borrowing costs, and cost taxpayers more money. For example, Danbury Local Schools in Ottawa County will experience a \$1.89 million revenue reduction in the first year, despite their carryover balance totaling \$1.4 million. Other districts see drastic impacts, like Scioto Valley Local Schools in Pike County where 64% of its balance will be wiped away.

These examples also raise constitutional concerns. Ohio's Retroactivity Clause prohibits the General Assembly from adopting laws that impair existing contracts. These school districts and others have entered into collective bargaining agreements based on revenue that has already been budgeted. By retroactively cutting those funds, HB 186 threatens school districts' ability to meet those legal obligations, which is a direct conflict with Ohio's constitutional protections.

Behind these numbers are the students of Ohio. The revenue at stake represents teachers in the classroom, bus drivers, counselors, and more. These resources have already been promised, appropriated, and collectively bargained. Retroactively stripping these resources away will hit hardest for those in our poor and rural schools who can least afford such a change. We are in an environment where we need to be focused on literacy, math, workforce, and attendance, and this retroactive change threatens our ability to maintain that focus and instead shift to survival. We fear that this new proposal will mean that the children who need us the most will lose the most.

As we shared four months ago in our prior testimony on this bill, we remain committed to working together toward solutions that promote both taxpayer fairness and adequate learning opportunities for children. We urge the committee to remove the retroactivity portion of the bill and return to the responsible framework of the original version of the bill.

Chairman Roemer and members of the committee, thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate your commitment to Ohio's schools and students. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.