



Statement

County Elected Officials Respond to Ohio Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration

September 16, 2010 (Columbus, OH) – Members of the Ohio Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration deserve credit for their report, suggesting incentives for collaboration and improvements in government efficiency. However, we strongly object to a recommendation that neither fosters collaboration nor improves efficiency.

The Commission proposes allowing a majority of county commissioners – 2 out of 3 people – to put an issue on the ballot to consolidate or totally eliminate elected offices. Putting forth the important decision to seek fundamental changes in local government must not be ceded to merely two county commissioners.

If Ohio's state lawmakers enacted this change, they would severely undercut the system of checks and balances that protects taxpayers. For example, county commissioners could threaten to eliminate the office of any elected official who stands in their way. That hardly promotes "collaboration."

Ohio could end up with an inefficient patchwork of different forms of government in 88 counties, frustrating businesses and individuals who depend on government to work for them.

We urge members of the Ohio General Assembly to carefully consider the Commission's recommendation to promote flexibility in reshaping county government. Ohio's budget crisis demands that local governments collaborate and cut budgets. An option must not include empowering county commissioners at the risk of the taxpayers.

From Ohio's Independently Elected Officials:

County Auditors' Association of Ohio – Jill Thompson, President
County Treasurers' Association of Ohio – Steve McGhee, President
Ohio Recorders' Association – Bryan Long, President
Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys' Association – John E. Murphy, Executive Director
Buckeye State Sheriffs Association of Ohio – Timothy Rogers, President
Ohio State Coroner Association – David T. Applegate, II, President
County Engineers' Association of Ohio – Dean Ringle, President
Ohio Clerk of Courts Association – Kathy Fortney, President

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