

Ohio Initiative Petition to Eliminate Property Taxes

Citizens for Property Tax Reform is a citizen's initiative for the 2026 ballot to amend the state constitution to eliminate real property taxes in Ohio. This is a reaction to the Ohio General Assembly's lack of serious reform since a 1997 *DeRolph v. State* court ruling that the state's method of funding public schools was unconstitutional. This is not one party vs another party, they have both kicked this can down the road.

The General Assembly has done little since 1997 and now that a ballot initiative is pending, they are playing catch-up. Recently a couple of laws have been passed to provide \$2.4 billion in tax relief over three years by limiting increases to inflation. About a 10% cut.

Of 44 bills introduced this year, 19 have not had hearings and 12 have only been heard once. Six bills have been moved to the Senate.

Senate Finance Committee Chair Jerry Cirino said they are working toward passing a pretty comprehensive bill or set of bills, hopefully before Thanksgiving. He said someone's got to figure out where the money is going to come from if there is going to be additional appropriations. (Journal-News, 11/2/25)

(Yes, is that not why we elect these people to figure these things out? If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem.)

Senate Ways and Means Committee Chair Bill Blessing said that rather than dealing with some of the underlying structural problems we just want to get rid of everything (referring to eliminating property taxes), to him that is entirely unreasonable. (Journal-News, 11/2/25)

(Yes, what also is unreasonable is 29 years of inaction and not dealing with the growing problem on the part of the General Assembly.)

House Speaker Matt Huffman said why the sudden urgency to pass property tax relief bills. (News 5, 10/23/25)

(See the above....)

The County Auditors Association has offered its solutions to the General Assembly, but nothing has come of that.

Many taxpayers do not realize that their local property taxes pay for their local services, it does not come from state funding.

Eliminating property taxes would have major effects on local government and services:

A loss of ~\$24 billion in property taxes. It would take ~18% sales tax to recoup the loss. Or the law would need to be changed to allow township government to initiate income taxes. An income tax of ~10% is another way to replace the loss of property taxes. It is currently ~2.75%. The state over the years has removed various taxes and where the tax base had businesses carrying ~54% of taxes and residents ~22%, it has since been flip-flopped.

Use taxes (license, gas, roads & bridge) pay for roads and bridges and their maintenance, but without property taxes, townships would not be able to provide full services.

Property taxes pay for fire departments. No local taxes: no ambulance or fire services. The cost of providing those services are from levies on properties. Those fire and ambulance services would need to be personally contracted by residents.

Property taxes pay for local zoning enforcement. Want a trash dump next door or encroachment on your property?

Property taxes pay for the county Sheriff Department.

Property taxes pay for cemetery maintenance and support. No mowing, weed eating, or funerals. One would have to find a private cemetery to bury loved ones.

Property taxes pay for parks; local and county. They would all be shuttered due to liability.

Property taxes pay for libraries.

Property taxes pay for Health Departments that provide services that most people have no idea to the extent of what they do for the health and safety of residents.

Property taxes pay for clean water and sewer management. Hope that there are no water main or sewer pipe breaks.

Without property taxes, most local governments would go bankrupt. Any bond issues for buildings or equipment would be called and taken over or taken back by the bond issuers. Better hope government buildings and trucks are paid off.

Without property taxes, local governments could easily cease to exist, and the State would take over local control. Say goodbye to your local representation.

The large problem for township government seems to be the amount of property taxes going to the local schools. School districts (including Maplewood) get ~67% of every property tax dollar where the township gets ~9% of every property tax dollar. We suggested to the General Assembly separating school funding from local property taxes.

We urge residents to contact their State Representatives and Senators to make this a priority and to reduce the political gamesmanship that has been so prevalent.