



Representative Derek Merrin
47th District

MEMORANDUM

TO: All House Members
FROM: Representative Derek Merrin
DATE: February 12, 2019
RE: Co-Sponsor Request: Ballot Uniformity and Transparency Act

I will soon introduce the Ballot Uniformity and Transparency Act. The legislation seeks to update antiquated ballot language making tax levies and bond issues clearer to voters. The bill's premise is simple – ballot language should be straightforward, unbiased, and provide relevant information to voters. My legislation fixes three flaws in current ballot language.

1. Express millage in terms of \$100,000 market value rather than \$100 taxable value. This is how media outlets already report the fiscal impact of levies. Home values are not in the \$100 range, so translating millage by \$100 increments is unwarranted. Furthermore, \$100 taxable value is actually \$287 market value, which further complicates the issue. The House approved legislation to this effect last session with HB 342.
2. Require all tax levies to list the revenue a levy will generate annually. Current law already requires some levies to disclose it, but not all levies. This is an inconsistency in law. County Auditors provide government entities with official estimates on how much a levy will generate. The legislation requires the same information submitted to local governments be included in ballot language. Its imperative voters know how much a levy will generate.
3. Require all ballot language text be uniform. All text size must be the same. No words will be bolded. Currently, some levies require different font size and specific words to be bolded. This forces ballot language to be longer than necessary and creates inconsistencies.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation or have any questions, please contact my Legislative Aide, James Kennedy, at James.Kennedy@ohiohouse.gov or at (614) 466-1731 by **Thursday, February 14 at 11:00 AM.**

Sincerely,
Derek Merrin
State Representative – District 47