

Ohio House Ways and Means Committee
House Bill 1 – Opposition Testimony

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Chairman Roemer, Vice Chair Merrin, Ranking Member Troy and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written opposition testimony on House Bill 1 (HB 1).

The Akron-Summit County Public Library (ASCPL) is organized as a county district library under Chapter 3375 of the Ohio Revised Code. The Library is proud to serve approximately 400,000 cardholding patrons and provide a wide array of services that benefit the entirety of the City of Akron and the County of Summit.

HB 1 would significantly reform Ohio's state income and local property tax structures. The legislation, in its current form, would negatively affect key ASCPL revenue streams. ASCPL understands that this legislation remains a work in progress and likely will undergo further changes. I share this information to help inform lawmakers on the role that ASCPL plays in the community, which will illustrate how reductions to revenue will negatively affect the community we serve.

ASCPL's Community Impact

- We provide access to nearly 3 million materials in print or in digital formats. The Library's membership in SearchOhio and OhioLink expands that access by millions.
- Our partnership with OhioMeansJobs provides on the spot resume assistance, help with setting up an OhioMeansJobs.com account, assistance with applying for job positions online, practice for interviews, and information about a specific industry or career path within an industry.
- ASCPL helped lead an initiative that led to the recognition of Summit County as a Dementia-Friendly Community. The Library provides Dementia-Inclusive resources to allow for continued library participation and resources for maintaining the skills and interests that make an abundant life possible beyond our Library walls.
- ASCPL launched a mobile hotspot and laptop bundle lending service to provide internet access to Library cardholders who do not have sufficient access in their homes.
- ASCPL collaborates with Community Legal Aid to provide the "Ask an Attorney" free legal help clinic for assistance with civil matters.
- The Microbusiness Center at Main Library provides accessible business training, educational resources, and individualized direction to established business owners, entrepreneurs, and college students pursuing entrepreneurial studies.

- The Early Childhood Resource Center lab houses equipment for use by teachers, childcare providers, home-school families, and education students to create learning materials and other items.
- ASCPL partners with KultureCity, a nonprofit dedicated to training staff around the country on sensory inclusion, to make a visit to the library a great experience, through sensory bags, weighted lap pads, and quiet zones, for all of our customers, including those with sensory-processing needs. ASCPL was the first public library in the nation to be designated a sensory inclusive space by KultureCity.
- The TechZone@Main, the Library's Makerspace, provides a variety of maker and creative equipment for microbusiness owners, nonprofits, and individuals to express their creative through both low-tech and high-tech options.
- The Library of Things offers a wide variety of non-traditional items for customers to borrow. These include musical instruments, STEM kits, original art works, kitchen tools and equipment, board games, and memory kits for those with memory loss and their caregivers.

ASCPL's Imminent Challenges

Thanks to the generosity of voters, the Library system benefited from an \$80 million bond issue in 1997 that resulted in new construction, additions or renovations at 16 of the 18 Library locations at that time. A new branch opened in the Village of Lakemore in 2017, bringing the total number of facilities to 19.

Fourteen buildings opened over five years, and because the "new" buildings are aging at roughly the same rate, ASCPL is dealing with a rapid increase in capital needs. HVAC, roofs, parking lots, and building envelopes all need attention with varying degrees of urgency. Any reduction in operating revenue will result in a reduced ability to respond to building emergencies quickly and completely.

ASCPL asks that, as the House of Representatives considers and debates tax reform, public libraries be held harmless from and negative or adverse financial effects. Thank you for the opportunity to share information about ASCPL and about its continued need for financial support. Thank you, too, past support of public libraries in Ohio.