Policy Matters Ohio

PRESS RELEASE

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Property tax repeal will especially harm suburban districts

District-level analysis shows property tax is critical

Repealing the property tax is especially likely to harm suburban districts, according to Policy Matters Ohio's new analysis of funding data. The brief uses the most recent available data to show the essential role property taxes played in funding school operations last year. District-by-district details are available in an interactive map and searchable tables, accompanied by a detailed methodology.

"The proposed constitutional amendment to abolish the real property tax, with no replacement revenue, is misguided and destructive," said Zach Schiller, Policy Matters Research Director and author of the brief.

"Schools across the state depend heavily on the tax," Schiller said. "This is especially true of those in districts classified by the state as 'suburban' and 'wealthy suburban.' Of the 50 districts where property tax pays for at least 74% of total pupil expenses, 24 are classified as wealthy suburban; another 18 are suburban."

"Other types of districts also depend on property tax to cover school costs," Schiller said. "Some 52 of Ohio's 123 'poor rural' districts relied on property tax for at least 30% of expenses, while 32 of 110 'small town' districts relied on them for at least 50%. The biggest city school districts were all above the state's median of 36%: Columbus, at 48%; Cleveland, at 39%; and Cincinnati, at 50%."

"Clearly, property taxes are essential to public schools across the state," Schiller said. "Ohioans deserve to know just how essential, especially now, as leaders of the effort to abolish Ohio's real property tax announce whether they will submit signatures to get their proposal on this November's ballot."

Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.