



LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDS PROVIDING EVERYDAY SERVICES FOR ALL OHIOANS!

July 8, 2004

**COPY SENT TO ALL
CANDIDATES**

Dear

As a candidate for the Ohio General Assembly, this summer and fall you will be spending much of your time meeting with constituents, including local government, park district and library officials, in a wide variety of settings. We thought it might be helpful to have some important information regarding a vital issue for all local and library officials throughout Ohio.

For seven decades, there has been a strong tie between state and local government through the local government funds provided by the state to local governments and libraries. Frankly, the future of that critical partnership has been severely threatened during the last two state budgets. Because of those threats, our members will want to talk to you over the next few months about the future of those funds. Because we know you will face questions about these funds, we thought it important to send to you some information about the funds and the safety net for everyday services they provide throughout the state.

The three local government funds (Local Government Fund, Local Government Revenue Assistance Fund and Library and Local Government Support Fund) provide essential everyday services in our communities, large and small. In a large city, where the public safety budget is often 60% of the city's GRF budget, local government funds help keep our streets safe and provide dollars for critical Homeland Security services. In many of our smaller communities, especially in small villages and townships, the local government funds provide dollars that cannot be raised locally for necessary everyday services like public safety and sanitation services. Without the local government funds, many of these small townships and villages could not maintain their current level of services. Without the local government funds, many counties would not have the means to provide critical services at current levels, including law enforcement and criminal justice services. And without the Library and Local Government Support Fund, 78% of Ohio's libraries would be left without their only source of funding. Cuts in local government funds threaten local recreation and parks programs and Ohio's park districts at a time when these services are integral components of many community strategies to attract and retain businesses.

**County Commissioners
Association of Ohio**

Harry Barlos, President
Lucas County Commissioner

Larry Long, Executive Director

Ohio Library Council

Tom Adkins, President
Garnet A. Wilson Public Library
of Pike County

Doug Evans, Executive Director
Lynda Murray, Director, Government
Relations

Ohio Municipal League

Matthew J. Kridler, President
City Manager, Springfield

Susan J. Cave, Executive Director

**Ohio Parks & Recreation
Association**

Molly McClure, President
Director, Anderson Park District

Michelle Park, Executive Director

Ohio Township Association

Joseph I. Sykes, President
Miami Township/Hamilton County

Michael H. Cochran, Executive
Director

The past few years have been tough times for managing both state and local government budgets. The local government funds have always taken tough times for the state into consideration. All three of the funds were on a statutory formula that goes up and down, depending on the rise and fall of state revenue. The formula set aside a percentage of certain taxes for local government support. If state revenues go down, so does local government support and vice-versa. During the last two state budgets, the funds were taken off of this established formula and subjected to cuts and freezes. Those cuts and freezes have resulted in local governments and libraries suffering a loss in state aid of \$673 million over a four-year period.

While we certainly appreciate the support local government has had from many lawmakers during two very tough state budgets, we do think it is important for us to point out the real value of having adequately funded local government funds in future state budgets.

Enclosed is information documenting these cuts and much more information about the importance of local government funds to everyday services in the communities and libraries of your district. We hope you will take the time to read this material and that this information is helpful to you in your discussions with local government, park district and library officials.

Sincerely,

Larry Long, Executive Director
County Commissioners Association of Ohio

Lynda Murray, Director, Government Relations
Ohio Library Council

Susan J. Cave, Executive Director
Ohio Municipal League

Michelle Park, Executive Director
Ohio Parks & Recreation Association

Michael H. Cochran, Executive Director
Ohio Township Association