

January 24, 2006

The Honorable Bob Taft
Governor, State of Ohio
77 S. High St., 30th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Governor Taft,

On behalf of the League's Board of Trustees and our 813 member-municipalities, I urge you to veto SB 82.

SB 82 attempts to void many local ordinances, provisions of collective bargaining agreements, charter provisions and civil service rules. This measure would ban residency requirements for municipal employees, unless those requirements are limited to contiguous counties of the municipality.

For decades, under the Home Rule provisions of the Ohio Constitution, many municipalities have had municipal residency requirements for some or all of their employees. In many cases, those requirements were put in place by the voters of a particular municipality. Time and again, those requirements have been affirmed by voters and by the state and federal courts. Instead of respecting those decisions and the Ohio Constitution, SB 82 would have the General Assembly's judgment take precedence over the Judiciary, the Ohio Constitution, local councils and hundreds of thousands of local voters across the state on a matter that is clearly a matter of local self-government.

We have tried to work diligently with your administration and the General Assembly on many, many issues over the past few years, from Issue 1 to gas taxes to an accommodation in the budget on Local Government Funds. In return, we have faced a number of disappointments from a preemption on predatory lending laws, oil and gas regulation and residential building codes, all of which measures favored private interests over the public interest.

In SB 82, we have an effort by those who could not win at the bargaining table, not win at the local ballot box or not win in court their point. So, they come to the forum of the General

Assembly, where, on the floor of the House, municipal voters are accused of acting like thugs of the former Soviet Union and holding municipal employees as “indentured servants.” These outrageous insults hurled upon our municipal voters and leaders, including Senator George Voinovich who pushed for residency requirements in Cleveland, shows an incredible lack of appreciation for the viciousness of the former Soviet Union and the shadow slavery that existed in this country under the cloak of indentured servitude.

In this latest measure, embodied in SB 82, the General Assembly is pushing its lack of respect for the Home Rule provisions of the Constitution to the limit. Should they be successful in this blatant and outrageous attempt to nullify the local voters who adopted residency provisions in their charters and statewide voters who adopted the Ohio Constitution, what will be next? Is the General Assembly now the only branch of government, state or local, that exists in Ohio? We hope not!

We strongly urge you to veto SB 82.

With Respect,

Susan J. Cave
Executive Director