



OHIO EDUCATION POLICY INSTITUTE

Ohio's Property Tax Crossroads

As public school administrators, you know better than anyone the pressures facing our communities. Families—especially seniors, veterans, and those on fixed incomes—are struggling to keep up with rising property taxes. At the same time, our schools and local services depend on a system that is increasingly unstable. Ohio's most vulnerable taxpayers deserve relief. Ohio's students deserve the opportunities that strong schools provide. As lawmakers consider reforms, what can we, as public school leaders, do?

Four Forces Driving the Crisis

A recent study by the Ohio Educational Policy Institute (OEPI) detailed the four key factors driving Ohio's property tax crisis:

1. *Home values skyrocketing* — up nearly 46% since 2020, pushing tax bills well beyond wage growth.
2. *Slow wage growth* — Ohio's per capita income is just 88% of the national average.
3. *State funding shifts* — Two decades of tax cuts and policy changes have shifted more of the load onto local taxpayers, who now pay 67.5% of all school property taxes (up from 46% in 1991).
4. *HB 920 and levy fatigue* — As a result of increased valuations, nearly 400 districts are at the 20-mill floor, where reappraisals automatically raise taxes. Ohio has more school levy campaigns than any other state — nearly 13,000 operating levies since HB 920 was adopted in 1976.

By the Numbers

Key statistics from OEPI to remember:

- +46% — Rise in typical Ohio home values since 2020.
- 67.5% — Share of school property taxes now paid by homeowners (46% in 1991).
- 8th — Ohio's national rank in property tax burden.
- \$26.6 billion — Value of abated property in 2024, up from \$5.7 billion in 2004 placing more stress on homeowners.
- 381 — Number of districts at the 20-mill floor in 2024 (up from 105 in 2012).

Why It Matters

Some groups are now pushing for a constitutional amendment to abolish property taxes altogether. Let's be clear: that would defund schools and essential services overnight and unleash chaos across Ohio.

The solution is *reform, not repeal*. Our associations support practical changes that:

- Strengthen the homestead exemption and tie relief to income.
- Protect seniors and veterans from unmanageable increases.
- Cap growth in 20-mill floor districts while ensuring schools are reimbursed.
- Give districts flexible tools without undermining stability.

Call to Action

We need your voice. In your communities, help your neighbors understand that reform—not repeal—is the solution. Call your legislators to ensure they understand the impact reforms will have on your students. Together, we can ensure stability for schools, fairness for taxpayers, and the preservation of local control that defines Ohio's tradition.