



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT AND REFORM
COMMITTEE**

**KENT SCARRETT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OHIO MUNICIPAL LEAGUE**

SB 10

March 5, 2019

Chair Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate Government and Oversight Reform Committee, thank you for the opportunity to write in support of SB 10.

SB 10 will increase the charges for theft in office to a second-degree felony in instances where the stolen property is valued between \$150,000 or more \$750,000. If the stolen property is valued over \$750,000, this will result in a first-degree felony charge. Current law places the ceiling at a third-degree felony with a maximum penalty of a three-year prison sentence.

The public places their faith and trust in officials, expecting them to execute their official duties with honesty and integrity. Those who violate that trust by stealing taxpayer dollars must be held to a higher level of accountability than is allowed under current law. In addition, the municipality in question is currently left responsible for the costs of the forensic auditing that resulted in a public official's conviction. That would change under SB 10, which makes the convicted official in question responsible for those auditing costs.

The Ohio Municipal League understands that despite the training and resources we make available to our elected municipal officials around the state, those measures will sometimes not be enough of a deterrent to the theft of taxpayer dollars. When those instances occur, it is imperative that the convicted official is held responsible for the financial impact of the forensic audits the city or village was forced to conduct. It is also imperative that the penalties for the theft of taxpayer dollars be increased as a deterrent to those who might violate the public trust.

We want to thank Sen. Wilson for recognizing the need for this legislation, and we want to thank you for your consideration of this bill. We urge your support.

Sincerely,

Kent Scarrett
Executive Director
Ohio Municipal League