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**Ohio Municipal League to Focus on Funding and Local Control During
135th Ohio General Assembly**
2023-2024 Public Policy Agenda Released

[COLUMBUS, Ohio, Jan. 12, 2023] – Ensuring adequate funding of municipalities and preserving local control will be top priorities for the Ohio Municipal League during the 135th Ohio General Assembly, based on OML’s newly released 2023-2024 Public Policy Agenda.

The policy agenda is an important tool to direct the organization’s legislative efforts as its member communities and staff advocate for state policies that ensure municipalities can continue to provide essential local services such as police and fire, safe streets and clean water for their residents and businesses.

“Two out of three Ohio residents live in a city or village, and the vast majority of Ohio businesses are located in municipalities – making municipalities economic drivers of our state,” said 2023 OML Board President Carrie Schlade, who serves as the mayor of the City of Bryan. “When state leaders put cities and villages in a position to be successful and allow them to make decisions at the local level, our businesses thrive, our residents experience a higher quality of life, and Ohio becomes more attractive and prosperous.”

The agenda was created with the input of municipal officials from across the state. OML also recently surveyed its member communities on the greatest challenges they are facing in 2023. The top four challenges included: Infrastructure Projects and Maintenance (roads/water/sewer) at 77.5%; Increased Costs/High Inflation at 72.5%; Fiscal Challenges and Revenue Generation at 61.25%; and Employee Recruitment and Retention at 53.75%.

The policy agenda will help address these challenges. The issues in the agenda are encapsulated in four core areas:

- **Creating Jobs** – Implementing tools to support economic development efforts and housing of choice for the work force

- **Protecting Citizens** – Supporting first responders and emergency management efforts, while also continuing to fight opioid addiction
- **Investing in Public Infrastructure and Clean Water** – Ensuring that roads, bridges, water, sewer, broadband and other important infrastructure assets continue to receive state investment
- **Advancing Good Government and Fiscal Responsibility** – Preserving municipalities' home-rule authority granted by the Ohio Constitution, supporting the local administration of income taxes, preventing unfunded mandates, and creating equity in communities

OML is asking for the state to reinvest in communities by increasing the state's Local Government Fund, which was drastically cut in 2011 and has not been fully restored since then. It is also focused on protecting public safety funding at a time communities struggle with attraction and retention of police officers and firefighters. These and other front-line services would not be possible for communities without the revenue generated through the municipal income tax.

"A strong partnership between the State of Ohio and its municipalities leads to increased economic growth, safer infrastructure, better housing and healthier residents," OML Executive Director Kent Scarrett said. "Our goal is to take these public policy priorities and work alongside Gov. DeWine and state lawmakers to make necessary changes and, thereby, strengthen our state's communities."

OML's 2023-2024 Public Policy Agenda can be viewed in its entirety [here](#).

The Ohio Municipal League is a non-profit organization that represents the collective interests of more than 730 cities and villages before the Ohio General Assembly and state administrative offices.

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