

Protect Township Zoning Authority

In 1947, the Ohio General Assembly enacted local zoning through ORC 519. We know many of you recognize the importance of local township governance. We thank you for preserving and supporting township zoning authority. This plea addresses any effort by those who wish to dismiss that authority such as what the Central Building Industry proposed in their white paper in December, 2023.

The processes to amend local zoning codes include input from township citizens. These include no less than two (2) public hearings and/or voter referendum. Ohio is not a one-town-fits-all state because each township is unique. Who better than local residents to ensure proper development, community needs, sustainability and economic growth uniquely tailored to the characteristics, dynamics, values, aspirations and demands of their individual community? Because of this, local zoning authority is a prime example of the purest form of American democracy.

Townships exhibit great efficiency in zoning due to local knowledge and understanding of community needs especially when residents themselves serve on their own local zoning boards. Approximately 800 Ohio townships have zoning which means there are approximately 8,000 township citizens serving on Boards of Zoning Appeal and Zoning Commission Boards. Many of these residents simply volunteer their time as a way to give back to the community in which they live to ensure residents have a strong voice in the local zoning process. State-mandated zoning will rob opportunity from these citizens, disrupt this efficiency and will hinder timely local decision making.

Centralized zoning decisions at the state level is an overreach and infringement of the democratic process and an assault on the lowest magistrate. Anything other than local zoning authority will undermine the unique identity of each township, jeopardize property value and otherwise negatively impact the very spirit of individual communities.

Township zoning is created by and voted upon by township residents. Therefore, we, the undersigned, who as of May 22, 2024, are all elected officials, are unequivocally opposed to any and all legislation which, in any way or manner, strips any zoning authority from Ohio townships.

We are grateful for your time and consideration, now and in the future, regarding this matter.