

Ohio lawmakers want to make it harder to pass property tax levies

By Haley BeMiller
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As Ohio homeowners sound the alarm about high property taxes, lawmakers want to make it harder to pass local levies.

Reps. David Thomas, R-Jefferson, and Angie King, R-Celina, are crafting legislation that would require 60% of voters to [approve levies](#) for schools, libraries and other services. Right now, levies that go to the ballot can be enacted with a simple majority of the vote.

Thomas said the measure will protect homeowners and ensure taxes have the community's full backing. It currently applies to all property tax levies, but Thomas said the details could change as stakeholders provide more input.

"We hear from a lot of property owners that say anyone can vote on these, not everyone pays them, and some folks don't know what they're voting on," Thomas told the statehouse bureau May 29.

The bill is the latest attempt to satiate Ohioans who have [demanded property tax relief](#).

Homeowners got hit hard by recent increases in property values, but the Legislature hasn't agreed on a way to provide assistance. Frustrated by the inaction, a group based in Cuyahoga County is [collecting signatures](#) for a constitutional amendment to eliminate property taxes altogether. The proposal has an uphill climb to the ballot, but advocates say lawmakers left them with no other choice.

Do levies get 60% of the vote in Ohio?

Local levies tend to have mixed results at the ballot box.

Franklin County police and fire levies that passed in the May 6 primary received 57% to 78% of the vote, [according to local election results](#). School and township levies in Hamilton County varied

similarly last year, even as some homeowners [vowed to boycott](#) levies because of property tax increases.

"Legislators are trying to solve their property tax problem, but rather than addressing the need for resources to do that, they're just trying to find different ways to cause problems for schools," said Scott DiMauro, president of the Ohio Education Association.

Thomas' bill mirrors an attempt by Republicans in 2023 to [make it harder](#) to pass citizen-initiated constitutional amendments. Critics at the time called the idea undemocratic – and they don't think this plan is any better.

"Voters rejected this statewide," Franklin County Auditor Michael Stinziano said. "I don't think it's good for democracy. And it's already hard enough for levies to pass. I'm not sure what we're fixing."

Unlike the statewide proposal, voters wouldn't have a say in whether the threshold for levies should increase. But Thomas said Ohioans want them to tackle the property tax problem from all angles.

"We have to do big, bold things because our taxpayers are just at their wits end," Thomas said.