

Press Release
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**Lake County Recorder Calls On Ohio Legislators
To Remove Language From House Bill 95 That
Would Double All Recording Fees Statewide**

“While the State looks to find alternative sources to fund a Housing Trust Fund, the Recorder’s office is the last place any Ohio legislator should look for more revenue.”

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[Painesville, OH] – The State of Ohio financial woes have sunk to new depths...the proposed doubling of Recording fees? That’s right. House Bill 95 introduced just last week by State Representative Chuck Calvert calls for just that – the doubling of all recording fees to fund an Ohio Trust Fund that was established in 1991. “The rationale of such a proposal appears to remove the expenditure out of the red inked general fund and to find a new source of revenue that could be able to continue to fund such a program. Let’s hit the Recorder’s fees”, exaggerated an irate Lake County Recorder Frank Suponcic.

Suponcic has long chastised the recording fees in Ohio as excessive as he perceives his office as a service organization and not a revenue generating organization. Other Recorders do not unanimously accept his perception. Some have previously stated, “No Recorder has ever said the fees are too high (until now)”. Ohio law mandates recorders fees. His fee cutting has been limited to eliminating marginal filings and last fall he proposed allowing the title association to install their own printer that would eventually save them \$75,000 a year in paying excessive copy fees.

So how does the doubling proposal contained in House Bill 95 sit with him? “This is a joke – it is an unconscionable travesty for any responsible person to recommend that recorder fees be increased - let alone doubled - for any reason. It is time that elected officials in Columbus start evaluating departmental efficiency across the board and start downsizing government just like the rest of businesses facing today’s tough economic climate. Government cannot continue to be all things to all people, provide more services, and grow, without someone eventually paying for it.”

House Bill 95 calls for the DOUBLING all of the fees that are charged by the Recorder’s office for every fee from basic recording to individual copy fees. “Imagine paying \$2 per page for a single sheet of paper? This is just insane. If this passes and becomes law, I have no idea how these people will be able to look in a mirror and say this is right.”

Last year Suponcic’s office realized about \$1.8 million in general fund revenues, \$1.5 million in 2001, and close to \$1 million in 2000. Suponcic’s costs for operating the Recorder’s office – in 2002 records show general fund expenditures a tad under \$500,000 – the rest profit returned to the general fund of Lake County. \$1.2 million or almost 60% profit if you factor in all of the other departments administered by the Recorder. “And they want to double that?” questioned Suponcic (a CPA). He continued by adding, “Simply insane, just outrageous.”

The text of the bill is available online at www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills. Refer specifically to section 317.32.

Suponcic has already written to the Painesville Title Association advising them of the proposal and has sent letters as well as phoned both area State of Ohio Representatives Callender and Young. He has flyers ready to distribute urging the public to stop the proposed fee doubling as contained in HB 95 and has posted a letter of such a fee doubling in his window. "This will be a battle, but in principal it will be worth the fight."

"Just what is the logic of "taxing people" for refinancing their home or purchasing a home and having a mortgage?" The more Suponcic talks about this, the more he has to stop as it is personally upsetting

"I'm trying to reduce my fees because they are so excessive and then I turn around and there are legislators in Columbus that want to double them!"

To continue his crusade, Suponcic will be meeting with several Ohio legislators in Columbus on the issue as well as meeting with other Ohio Recorders who are harmonious in their opposition to the proposed House bill that would double their fees. While Suponcic says that it is only a proposal at this point, it certainly has drawn the ire of Recorders across the State. "I have not spoken to, or heard of any Ohio Recorder that thinks doubling the fees is a prudent fiscal move and these are people that didn't want to afford me the opportunity to be able to reduce mine!"

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