



League of Women Voters of Ohio

## **ACTION ALERT:**

### **Urge Senate to Drop Changes to Ohio Housing Trust Fund**

Dear Friends,

**The Ohio Housing Trust Fund, for many years the primary source of support for low-income housing and homelessness programs, is in danger of losing funding due to a proposed change announced this week by the Ohio Senate.** The Senate added the proposed change to the state biennial budget bill (HB 64), which would give half of the Housing Trust Fund monies directly to each of Ohio's 88 counties, although most counties are ill-equipped to administer them.

**Action needed: Call your Senator to ask that changes to the Housing Trust Fund in HB 64 be deleted.**

Look up your Senator [here](#).

#### Background:

The Housing Trust Fund is administered by the Ohio Development Services Agency, and supports a range of housing needs, including emergency shelter, construction, rehab and repair, rental assistance and financial counseling for formerly homeless families. Funds are allocated based on recommendations by a 14-member advisory committee representing various sectors of the housing and lending industries and local governments, and are targeted toward helping low-income Ohioans. The committee and the department have functioned effectively together for almost 25 years.

#### Here are some of the many problems if this amendment is included in the budget:

- Rather than relying on the Housing Trust Fund advisory committee's experience and knowledge of housing needs and the ability to set important priorities for funding allocation, this would be lost and responsibility would be given to 88 county governments without the same long-standing expertise.
- Half the funds -- already a too-small pot of money to meet the housing needs in the state -- would be removed from the state Housing Trust Fund. As it works now, the trust fund leverages federal and private resources to stretch available funds at a ratio as high as 9 to 1 to meet housing needs.
- The Housing Trust Fund has a statutory limit of 5% or less to be used for administration. **The county program would create 88 separate county bureaucracies, each of which would require unspecified amounts of administrative funds to operate.**

- The effect of the amendment would be the creation of 88 mini-bureaucracies, many without experience in administering housing programs, with little understanding of statewide needs, and no protections to ensure desperately needed funds go to housing rather than administration.

LWVO support of the Housing Trust Fund extends from its creation in 1990 through the establishment by law of a dedicated funding source for the trust fund in 2003. That source of funding is a share of fees collected by county recorders and transferred to the state. Our support is based on the LWVUS position on housing supply; specifically, that government at all levels must make available sufficient funds for housing-assistance programs.

**Please take five minutes to call or email your state Senator and urge them to oppose changes to the Housing Trust Fund and remove them from the state budget, HB 64.**

**Thank you for taking action!**

**LWVO Lobbying Team**