

Legislative Liaison Report May 20, 2024

A requirement that school districts adopt a cell phone usage policy was attached to House Bill 250, originally a revision to the Military Enlistment Diploma Seal. Specifically, the cell phone usage policy portion of the bill requires each public school to adopt a policy governing the use of cell phones by students during school hours; requires that districts make their cell phone usage policy publicly available and post it on their website; and requires the Department of Education and Workforce to adopt a model cell phone policy that could be used by districts.

Continuing our following of the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform, the committee met and heard testimony focusing on property taxes from Howard Fleeter with the Ohio Education Policy Institute. A great deal of his testimony focused on the impact of House Bill 920 which was passed in 1976. He stated that HB 920 is the most restrictive property tax limitation in the country because it allows no inflationary growth on voted levies. It also is the primary reason that Ohio relies on local levies more than any other state. Among his conclusions he commented on the re-appraisal issue that garnered an exorbitant amount of media and political attention. He stated: "Recent reappraisal increases are far outside historical norms. The 2023 reappraisal and update increase is 7.3 times as large as the prior reappraisal and update increase for the same counties in 2017. *The recent rapid increase in housing values is best viewed as a historically anomalous short-term issue.*" He further specified that In 1975 residential and agricultural taxpayers paid 46.1% of property taxes. In 2022 they (we) paid 66.1% reflecting a shift over time in tax burdens from businesses to homeowners and farmers. This shift is predominantly the result of state tax policy changes.