
Detailed Fiscal Analysis

Overview of the bill

The bill permits a board of county commissioners in a county with a population greater than 1.2 million – Cuyahoga County – to submit to the electors a proposal to adopt a restructured form of county government. The revised county government structure outlined in the bill is based upon the November 7, 2008 recommendations submitted by the Commission on Cuyahoga County Government Reform. Should voters approve the ballot issue, the county could incur transition costs for reassigning employees and securing new office space that may be needed. Over the long run, consolidating administrative functions of the four elected offices specified in the bill within a new Department of Finance might reduce overall administrative expenses. The proposed structure and the potential fiscal effects of implementing this functional consolidation of Cuyahoga County government services are described below.

Proposed structure

County commissioners and county administrator

The bill would retain three county commissioners, each with four year terms. However, these terms would no longer be staggered as they are in current law. The bill also creates the position of President of the Board of County Commissioners, a separately elected position, with expanded powers. The President of the Board would (1) recommend the annual county budget, (2) recommend appointment of the county administrator and department directors, and (3) oversee the county administrator, who would serve as the county's chief operating officer. The Board of County Commissioners as a whole would approve the budget, approve appointees and approve other major transactions.

Elected offices retained

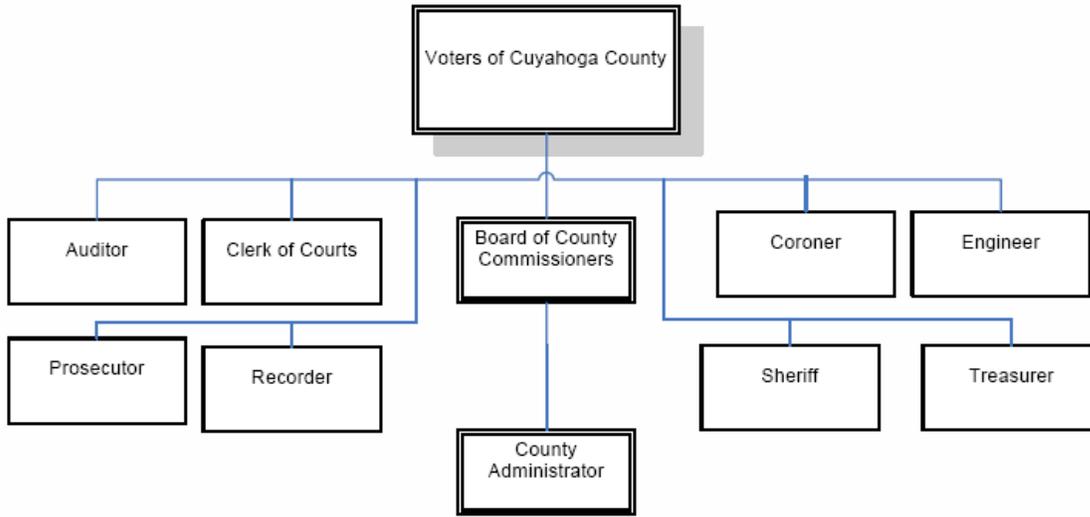
The bill would retain the County Sheriff and County Prosecutor as elected positions. However, the Prosecutor's functions related to civil law would be transferred to the Department of Law, with a Law Director appointed by the county commissioners.

Elected offices eliminated

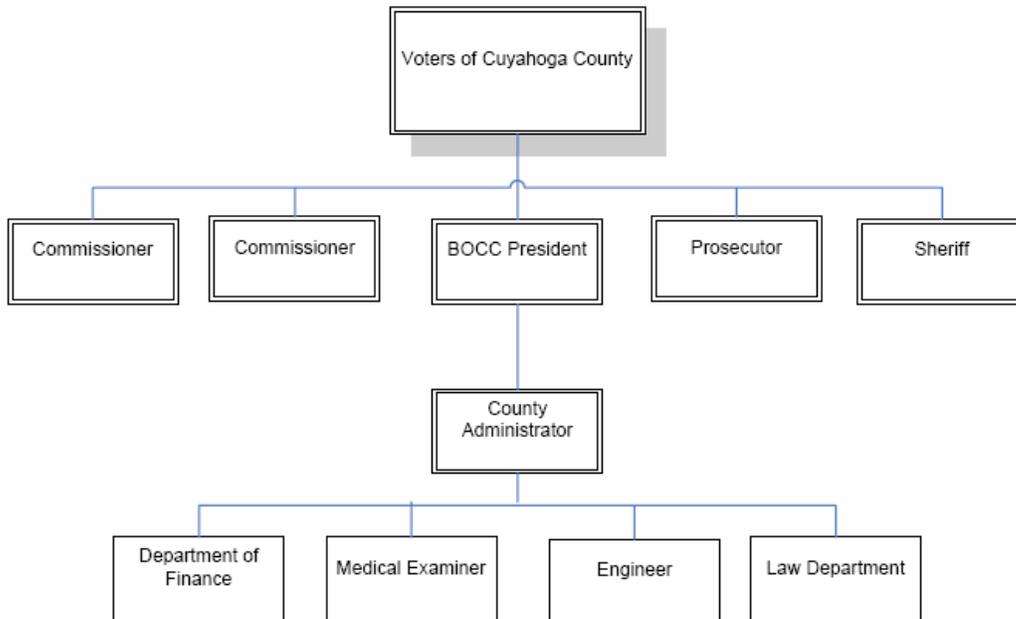
The County Auditor, County Recorder, County Engineer and County Treasurer would cease to be elected positions. Instead, these offices would become appointed positions and would be transferred to the Department of Finance. Additionally, the Office of Budget and Management and Title Division of the Clerk of Courts would also be moved to the Department of Finance. The Clerk of Courts would then be appointed by the Court of Common Pleas. The County Coroner would become an appointed Medical Examiner. The chart below shows the current structure of Cuyahoga County government versus the consolidated form proposed in the bill.

Chart: Current Cuyahoga County Government Structure and Proposed Changes

Current Structure



Proposed Structure*



*This organizational chart illustrates primarily the proposed arrangement of offices that currently are headed by elected officials. Many other County departments are not depicted.

Source: *Report of the Commission on Cuyahoga County Government Reform*, November 7 2008.

Department of Finance

Overall, the change with the most immediate fiscal effect would be the creation of a Department of Finance. This new department will be comprised of the following current elected offices: (1) County Auditor; (2) County Treasurer; (3) County Recorder; (4) Office of Budget and Management; and (5) Title Division of the Clerk of Courts. The table below shows county FY 2008 appropriations (all sources) and staffing levels (FTEs) for the current elected offices that would be housed within this new department. In the short term, these overall staffing and funding levels would probably remain about the same. Over time, however, there would likely be some adjustments as staffing and space needs under the new department are assessed.

FY 2008 Appropriations for Cuyahoga County Elected Offices Affected by H.B. 655 Reorganization		
Agency	Staffing Level (FTEs)	FY 2008 Appropriations
County Auditor	275	\$23,862,182
County Treasurer	87	\$7,935,569
County Recorder	96	\$7,186,205
Clerk of Courts*	89	\$5,363,080
Total	547	\$44,347,036

* Title Division only

The FY 2008 appropriations for the office listed above come from the county general fund, as well as enterprise and various special purpose funds. These funding sources are likely to remain the same, although there could be some alteration in the county's budget structure as the reorganization is implemented.

Law Department

A potential new restructuring cost would be the transfer of civil law oversight from the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office to a newly created Law Director appointed by the Cuyahoga County Board of Commissioners. The total FY 2008 budget for the Prosecutor's Office, including civil and criminal law oversight, was \$26,429,959, with a total staffing level of 282 FTEs. According to calendar year 2007 data, the latest available, the Prosecutor's Office handled 39,483 civil case dispositions in 2007 and 517 civil case trials. Because the Prosecutor's staff is assigned to both criminal and civil cases, it would be difficult to determine how many staff members would be transferred to the new Law Department. It would also be difficult to determine how many administrative staff members would be transferred and how many new employees would be needed. The overall fiscal effect of this change would largely depend on whether existing staff in the Prosecutor's Office would be transferred to the new department or new staff was required.

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