



## **COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF OHIO**

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) would like to take this opportunity to raise serious objection to the unfunded mandates report entitled 2006 Local Impact Statement Report. While the report largely fulfills statutory requirements, our association views the report as a gross under-representation of the burden counties face due to unfunded or under-funded mandates placed upon county government by the General Assembly. CCAO would like to work with lawmakers to develop a comprehensive, collaborative process that will identify all unfunded mandates, metrics to measure them, and strategies to address them.

Our objection centers around the failure of the report to accurately reflect the impact upon county government contained within HB 66, the state biennial budget bill for fiscal years 2006 and 2007 that was enacted in 2005. HB 66 contained several items that drastically impacted the relationship between state and county government, specifically: the "freeze" on Local Government Funds; cost implications created by tax reform; cuts to the already woefully inadequate level of funding for indigent defense reimbursement to the counties; and the decreasing percentage of funding being contributed by the state in a host of programs that we provide to the residents of Ohio jointly, including but not limited to adult protective services, the Bureau of Medically Handicapped Children and TB treatment and detention costs.

Despite CCAO having grave concerns about the scope of this particular report, we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the professionalism and expertise of the LSC staff. We have always found the work of LSC to be fair and objective.

Moreover, we would like to take this opportunity to urge the General Assembly to work with local governments to develop an instrument, which both state and local government partners can use to identify unfunded & under-funded mandates and measure their costs. Then to subsequently have a forum to strategize how to address the mandates, whether it is to fund them, modify them, establish a funding source that can be levied, or simply to repeal them. Such identification and strategy used to be done by the State & Local Government Commission, and there seems to be a void in its absence. Therefore, we look forward to working with the General Assembly and Administration to enhance the collaboration and cooperation between state & local government leaders in this area.