

IO Says, Admin Disagrees That School Levies Up Under Kasich

Tuesday, October 22, 2013

School Levies: Innovation Ohio on Tuesday said a new analysis of school ballot issues shows the total number of new "operating money" requests and the dollar amounts sought during [Gov. John Kasich](#)'s term is greater than under the previous administration.

The Office of Budget and Management said, however, the data used by the group is misleading and a longer-term look at the numbers draws a different conclusion.

IO's analysis includes 72 new operating levies seeking \$260 million total that are slated for the November ballot. The study considers requests between May 2011 and November 2013 - which totals 475 seeking \$1.59 billion - compared to those sought between May 2007 and November 2009. The group said the change was a 27.7% increase in requests and 39.1% increase in money under the Kasich Administration.

"This analysis is proof positive that the school funding cuts enacted by Gov. Kasich and his legislative allies have simply shifted the burden to local taxpayers," IO President Janetta King said. "Until now, the administration has claimed that state funding cuts haven't had an impact on local schools or local taxpayers. And they've preposterously asserted that despite their cuts, the number of new money levies for operations haven't risen since they took office.

"Even now, we fully expect that they will try to confuse the issue by lumping school construction levies in with school operating levies and claim that the number of levies has held constant."

Office of Budget and Management spokesman Jim Lynch, said, however, data and news reports reviewed by the office indicates the total number of school levies this fall is below the historical average, which holds the same for earlier election cycles.

"It's easy to be innovative with statistics, to slice and dice data in ways that yield the particular conclusion that serves your agenda," he said. "Before you're satisfied with these agenda-oriented reports, ask if the sources have looked across a longer period of time - say 10 years - for some historical perspective.

Mr. Lynch said Gov. Kasich has made education a key priority to help improve results in Ohio's classrooms.

"His Achievement Everywhere Plan, signed in late June, allocates \$1.6 billion in new state funds for the next two fiscal years, putting more dollars into Ohio classrooms so that FY 2015 funding levels will exceed FY 2011 actual state spending by \$1.39 billion," he said.

The Ohio School Boards Association said earlier this month that the number of levies and new money requests on this November's ballot is fairly typical for a general election. (See [Gongwer Ohio Report, October 3, 2013](#))

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