

A RESOLUTION ADDRESSING THE TAX COMPETITIVENESS OF GREATER CLEVELAND

The Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP) has a long track record of supporting signature tax levies from individual taxing authorities throughout our region. This is clearly exhibited by GCP's support of six out of the seven leading tax increases in our region since 2012. We respect the dedication and professionalism of the elected officials and agencies that project the tax requirements of Greater Cleveland and enjoy working directly with them to address these issues. Proposed relatively independently from one another, each of them was deemed to have merit and were important to the overall health of the community at the time. Voters have been positively supportive as well when these issues appeared one at a time, over the last few years.

However, the recently unveiled Greater Cleveland Partnership tax analysis revealed that our residents now face a disproportionate tax burden relative to peer metro cities and surrounding adjacent counties, and that our tax burden is growing at a more rapid pace. The impact of our growing tax rates on a stable population could have serious negative repercussions on Cuyahoga County residents and employers. In order to maintain a competitive economic and social environment in Greater Cleveland, changing our approach to raising tax revenues and/or the governmental structures that oversee such revenues has become imperative. While our population over the past 50 years has shrunk by nearly 30%, our governmental infrastructure hasn't changed in meaningful ways.

In anticipation of additional levy requests to be proposed in the near future to city and county voters, the Greater Cleveland Partnership will oppose future levy millage increases that fail to demonstrate a unique compelling contribution to our economy, a severe and urgent societal need or a more creative approach to achieving their objectives. We urge and hope that the public, private and philanthropic sectors along with others join in an effort to examine a more cost-effective means of providing efficient government services in our region. This resolution will guide our positioning on tax increases until an agreed-upon process for community action is in place. GCP will likely support responsible levy renewals during this period as change is discussed and pursued.

On October 1, 2019 this resolution is agreed to by the Greater Cleveland Partnership Board of Directors.