

Charter Committee Levy Review Summary

Levy: Comprehensive Safety Plan Levy

1. What is the levy?

- A. Issue 27 – Approved ballot language attached as Schedule A.
 - i. A “Yes” vote is a vote approving the action of the county commissioners who enacted an increase in the County sales tax of ½ percent for 8 years and ¼ percent for an additional 7 years.
 - ii. Funding is to provide for very broad Public Safety Services. County estimates, with growth in sales tax base, that 15 year duration of increased tax will provide sufficient funds for duration of 30 year Comprehensive Safety Plan (“Plan”). No guarantee that funds will be used for specific Plan purposes.

2. What will Levy fund?

\$211,000,000	Capital costs: New 1800 bed adult jail; addition to Juvenile Facility; Remodel Justice Center
411,000,000	Jail Operations
21,900,000	Juvenile Operations
69,000,000	Increase Sheriff’s Patrols
8,400,000	Fed Prosecutions of Gun Crimes
60,000,000	Communications (increased local cops)
57,000,000	Treatment
13,500,000/28,500,000	Reentry
6,570,000	Criminal Justice Commission
858,370,000/873,370,000	Total

- A. Capital Costs.
 - i. \$198,000,000.00 projected cost, including inflation of 5% per year and contingencies. New 1800 person adult facility, includes assessment, treatment and specialty beds (Camp Washington – Kahns site) with treatment options onsite and renovation of Justice Center (as recommended by Voorhis report). Plan estimates that it will meet needs currently and for 30 year life of Plan. Replace Queensgate facility (Kruse Hardware – which does not meet Ohio standards for housing inmates) , inmates held in Butler County (and perhaps in Campbell County in future), and 2 other smaller facilities (Turning Point and Reading Road). *Anti Levy - The estimated per bed cost for building this jail is \$110,000. Clermont County per bed cost was \$ 50,925 in 2006. Warren County was \$ 27,777 in 2004. Butler County was \$ 47,619 in 2002. This jail plan is not a good one for the taxpayers of Hamilton County.*
 - ii. \$11,000,000.00 50 bed expansion of Juvenile facility allowing for treatment of juveniles closer to home, rather than shipping out of county to state facility and for continued family contact.
 - iii. \$2,000,000.00 Renovation of Justice Center.
- B. Operating Costs.
 - i. Operating costs of new facilities.
 - ii. Above is what is called for in ‘plan’. Language of resolution allows for much greater flexibility in spending.

iii. Plan indicates 'new' costs of operation for adult and juvenile facilities at \$14.4 million annualized over 30 years. Plan also indicates that it is saving \$200 Million over 30 years in "reduced operating expenses through consolidations and efficiencies."(Safety Plan, p. 19)

C. Sheriff Patrols. \$2,300,000 annualized cost over 30 years. Plan calls for funding expanded Sheriff's Patrols to communities, including within Cincinnati. *Anti levy – "Expand Sheriff Patrols in Over The Rhine. Sheriff department is not covered under the Collaborative Agreement, nor is subject to the Citizens Review Panel. Both of these were hard fought victories to improve police community relations. This plan undermines these victories".*

D. Communications. \$2,000,000.00 Annualized cost. Plan assumes some of communication and dispatch costs for different police organizations within the County.

E. Treatment, Reentry. \$2,850,000.00 Annualized cost. Plan provides increased support for Drug and Alcohol treatment, more probation officer contact, education and job training. *Anti Levy - According to the 2006 Hamilton County Tax Levy Review Committee, "Many inmates, who are incarcerated, particularly in jails, are there because they have nowhere else to go." Expanding the jail will incarcerate more mentally ill people. This is unacceptable. From 2001 to 2005 the mentally ill population in the jail grew 475 percent. Treating the mentally ill after they commit a crime does not help anyone. In 2004 the average length of stay for an inmate was 17 days. This is not long enough to have effective treatment in jail. If there is going to be treatment via the criminal justice system we want a commitment to number of treatment slots and beds. Earmarking general fund money for treatment is not a grantee of delivering treatment.*

F. CJC. Plan creates and funds a permanent commission to assess programs and processes for effectiveness, to allow County to maintain 'best practices' approach to the criminal justice system.

3. Who are the Players?

A. Pro Levy – Citizens for a Safe Community; Todd Portune, David Pepper of Hamilton County Commissioners; Cincinnati Council Members Bortz, Qualls, Berding, Thomas, Ghiz and Monzel; Candidates Eby, Young, Harris, and Cooper; Sheriff Si Leis; O'Dell Owens, Coroner; Dusty Rhodes, Auditor; State Representative Bill Seitz; Mayor John Smith, Silverton; Mayor Jim Brown, Lockland; Mayor Virgil Lovett, Sharonville; Mayor Sam Keller, Cheviot; Mayor Charles Kamine, Amberly Village; Mayor Dan Policastro, Mariemont; Mark Quarry, Silverton City Council; Hubert Brown, Whitewater Twp. Trustee; Gwen McFarlin, Springfield Twp. Trustee; Hamilton County Republican Party; Hamilton County Democratic Party; Cincinnati Enquirer; Cincinnati Business Committee; Hamilton County Association of Chiefs of Police; AFL-CIO Labor Council; Community Action Committee; Cincinnati Board of Realtors; Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce.

Pro Levy argument is that County has a duty to provide adequate facilities, that current facilities are inadequate, and that the Plan is the most cost effective long term approach, based on independent, third party assessments to address not only physical plant needs but to reverse the recidivism trends.

B. Anti Levy – Cincinnati FOP (oppose expanded patrols) and No Jail Tax PAC: *"NAACP, COAST, the Green Party, The Libertarian Party, A.C.O.R.N, Unite Cincinnati PAC, Progressives. Each of these organizations should be contacted separately as their positions and arguments may vary. The NAACP has voted in a membership meeting to oppose this tax. We are*

not sure if each of the other organizations has yet officially taken a position urging voters to vote NO, but we believe that they are all leaning in that direction.”

Levy opponents cross a broad spectrum of views and include those that believe the tax is too much, will drive people from Hamilton County and wastes money, as well as those that believe too many persons are incarcerated and that money should be spent on social programs, not incarceration.

4. The Comprehensive Safety Plan.

The Plan was created and recommended by the Corrections Review Task Force (“CRTF”), a committee appointed by the County Commissioners. The CRTF used independent studies from the Vera Institute of Justice (analysis of inmate characteristics and management processes) and Voorhis Associates (analysis of Building construction and operating costs) in creating the Plan. This levy was not reviewed by the Tax Levy Review Committee. The Plan recognizes that the inmate population has a high recidivism rate and that treatment and reentry training are important components to reducing return inmates. Plan indicates no disruption to current housing with new construction. Plan addresses findings by Vera Report that inmate profile has changed from 1999 to 2004 with inmates being more unemployed, less educated and more likely to use drugs with an increased length of stay. *Anti Levy - In 2004, 81 percent of bed days consumed was between bookings at court review. In 1999 this number was only 37 percent. Before we expand our jail by nearly 800 new beds we need to get this number back to the 1999 level. A jail bed is used only after a person has been victimized. Expanding the jail will not make us safer. 63 percent of the Hamilton County Jail inmates are African Americans. Expanding the jail is to expand an institution that has a significant racial disparity. A fundamental shift in emphasis away from emphasis on arrest and toward social rehabilitation must occur in criminal justice system.*