



News Release

**Parma Area Community
Leadership Group**

**Contact: Martin Vittardi
(440) 843-5893**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, June 5, 2009**

PARMA AREA COMMUNITY COALITION TO HELP PASS SCHOOL LEVY IN NOVEMBER

(PARMA) – A coalition of political, business, civic and religious leaders from Parma, Parma Heights and Seven Hills is banding together in an extraordinary effort to help pass the upcoming school levy in November. The group is co-chaired by Parma Clerk of Courts Marty Vittardi and Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Bill Mason. The mayors of all three cities attended a recent organizational meeting in support of the upcoming levy.

“We are saying to the community, ‘Save our schools and you save our cities,’” said Marty Vittardi. “Levy defeats are having a devastating impact on our children, housing values and, in general, the quality of life in the Parma area.”

“We can’t let that happen again,” said Bill Mason. “Defeat is not an option when there is so much riding on the future of our schools and the future of our community. We are united in our effort.”

As a result of the failure of the May levy proposal, 60 classes have been cut at the high school level and the graduation requirement has been lowered from 21 credits to the state minimum of 20 which will result in a shorter school day for most students at Normandy, Parma and Valley Forge High Schools.

Additionally, busing has moved to the state minimum limit of 2 miles for kindergarten-eighth graders and students at all levels must bear the full cost of participating in extracurricular activities provided enough of them are able to sign up to field a team, club or organization.

“The point is that residents are still getting more bang for their buck if they approve the levy,” said Parma Mayor Dean DePiero. “We understand it’s tough for residents in our area to make ends meet. But in reality, we can’t afford to turn down another school levy when the lack of money affects all walks of life for our cities.”

(more)

"Our residents have to understand the hard reality of all this," said Seven Hills Mayor David Bentkowski. "A continuous decline in property values will eventually have an impact on property tax revenue and General Fund money that fuels basic city services. There's no getting around it."

In May, Issue 17, a 5.5-mill new operating levy, was defeated by a nearly two to one margin. If approved, the property tax levy would have generated \$13.6 million for operating expenses. A resident's tax bill would increase by about \$15.00 per month for every \$100,000 of valuation with the amount being slightly lower for senior citizens.

"It's time we all step-up to the plate," said Parma Heights Mayor Marty Zanoliti. "We need to stop the bleeding, so to speak, and realize that as goes the local school system, so goes the fabric of our community. We cannot just stand by and do nothing while our future goes down the drain along with the quality of life for our residents, regardless of their age."

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