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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LUCAS COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY JULIA R. BATES RESPONDS TO BUDGET PRESENTATION COMMENTS

TOLEDO, Ohio – Lucas County Prosecuting Attorney Julia R. Bates has repeatedly shared her concerns with the Board of Lucas County Commissioners regarding its stated 13 percent reduction for county entities for Fiscal Year 2027. Bates outlined those concerns in letters sent to the commissioners on Aug. 10 and Sept. 28, 2026.

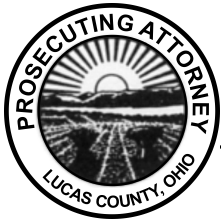
“Today, the Board of Lucas County Commissioners engaged in name-calling, petty criticism and abusive and disrespectful characterization of my background, my competence and my 30 years of elected tenure,” Bates said.

On Aug. 10, Bates sent a letter to the commissioners responding to the proposed 13 percent reduction. She wrote that a cut of that size is “entirely unacceptable and legally impermissible.” Under Ohio law, the Prosecutor’s Office is required to perform duties that protect public safety and ensure the administration of justice, and Bates wrote that a 13 percent reduction threatens the office’s ability to do that work.

Bates also wrote that Ohio courts have repeatedly held that county commissioners must provide enough funding for a prosecutor to carry out the office’s required responsibilities. She told commissioners she was willing to sit down and discuss other ways to save money without compromising the work of her team.

On Sept. 28, Bates sent a second letter to the commissioners. She acknowledged the difficult job commissioners have in balancing the county’s budget while also explaining her responsibilities as an independently elected prosecutor. Bates wrote that she answers directly to voters and is required by law to ensure public safety, prosecute crimes and protect the rights of victims.

She also wrote that while commissioners have the authority to establish the county’s overall budget, that authority cannot prevent the Prosecutor’s Office from carrying out duties required by state law.



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"I made it quite clear in my prior, written communication with the commissioners that we need to find an amicable way to resolve our differences consistent with state statute and to support the public safety work that I have carried out over eight terms in office," Bates said. "While I enjoy everything that Lucas County has to offer in my free time, the job performed by our team is more important than funding festivals. This could mean losing 10 to 13 prosecutors. In 2025, in our budget presentation to the commissioners, I shared that the different fairs and festivals supported by the commissioners are not bad, but to support these events and their safety, we need the Prosecutor's Office."

Assistant prosecutors handle felony cases involving murder, rape, shootings, robbery and other serious crimes. The office also works with law enforcement throughout Lucas County and helps victims and their families through the criminal justice process.

In her Sept. 28 letter, Bates raised that concern directly, writing that a 13 percent reduction could leave the office without enough prosecutors, victim advocates and investigators to handle serious and complex criminal cases.

"In my Sept. 28 letter, I asked rhetorically, 'Which severe crimes are we expected to leave unprosecuted?'" Bates said. "I remain willing to work with the commissioners to find ways to save money while maintaining the staff and resources needed to prosecute crimes, support victims and perform the work required of the office under Ohio law."

About the Lucas County Prosecutor's Office

The Lucas County Prosecutor's Office pursues justice, safeguards our community and advocates for victims. We balance accountability with individual rights, partnering with law enforcement to ensure public safety and fair governance. We are committed to integrity, outreach and justice for all.

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