



June 22, 2023

Dear Governor DeWine, Senate President Huffman, House Speaker Stephens, Minority Leader Russo, Minority Leader Antonio, and members of the Conference Committee,

Advocates for Ohio's Future (AOF) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of over 500 state and local health and human services policy, advocacy and provider organizations that strive to strengthen families and communities through public funding for health, human services, and early care & education. We work to empower and support nonprofit organizations and the health and human services workforce in the critical work they do, especially as it relates to lifting up and caring for all Ohioans.

As a coalition of a broad range of health and human service organizations, we unite to identify and prioritize the greatest needs of people and families across the state.

Over the past few months hundreds of organizations, advocates, and citizens testified to the real needs of Ohioans. They asked our elected leaders to create a state operating budget that truly prioritizes and supports families, children, and older adults with the goal of making Ohio the best state to live, work, raise a family, and age.

AOF commends Governor DeWine and the House of Representatives for their significant investments in programs that provide economic security, access to healthcare, help people get to work, and empower Ohio residents.

Unfortunately, the budget bill passed by Senate strips away many of the most transformative policies and investments proposed by the Governor and passed by the House of Representatives and moves Ohio further from that shared goal.

In your efforts to align House, Senate and Executive priorities in Conference Committee, we ask that you include or remove the following provisions to create a budget bill that invests in the health and future of our state's greatest resource—our people.

- **MCDCD43:** Continuous Medicaid enrollment for children from birth through age three **HOUSE**
- **MCDCD34:** Grants Medicaid coverage to both pregnant women and children under age 19 with incomes up to 300 percent FPL **HOUSE**
- **MCDCD52:** Establishes a five-year program in ODM to cover doula services **HOUSE**
- **JFSCD36:** \$15 million per FY increase for the Ohio Association of Food Banks **HOUSE**
- **JFSCD64:** ARPA Childcare: Establishes a child care scholarship for critical occupations and other direct service professionals **EXECUTIVE**
- **JFSCD95:** Photo identification for SNAP EBT cards **HOUSE**
  - Requires photo IDs to be included on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program electronic benefits cards, with very few exceptions.
  - [SNAP already employs strong anti-fraud measures to ensure program integrity](#)
- **JFSCD84:** SNAP able-bodied adults without dependents work requirement **HOUSE**
  - This provision restricts the Executive Branch from exercising its best judgement about whether it is appropriate to waive time limits (which limits SNAP participation to 3 months out of every 3

years) on SNAP benefits when economic conditions warrant doing so. If a new recession leads to spiking unemployment rates, this would leave the Governor without tools to aid those who lose their jobs through no fault of their own and cannot afford food.

- Ohio already uses its time limit waiver flexibility prudently. Currently, only 8 counties (mostly in Appalachia) receive waivers due to economic conditions. Banning future use short-sighted policymaking and would leave Ohio unprepared for the next recession.
- **AGECD14:** Healthy Aging Grants: Provides \$40M in one-time grants to local partners to foster improved quality of life for seniors so they can remain in their homes and connected to their communities, delay entry into Medicaid, preserve their personal assets, and promote a healthy, independent, active lifestyle **HOUSE**
- **AGECD11:** Senior Community Services funds to provide grants to community organizations to support and expand older adult programming. Requires service priority to be given to low income, high need persons and/or persons with a cognitive impairment who are 60 years of age or over. **EXECUTIVE**
- **KIDCD2:** Earmarks up to \$15,000,000 in FY 2024 for Healthy Beginnings at Home, to support stable housing initiatives for pregnant mothers and to improve maternal and infant health outcomes **EXECUTIVE**
- **KIDCD16:** Increases eligibility for publicly funded child care to 160% of the federal poverty line (from 142%) for initial eligibility and 300% for continued eligibility. **HOUSE**
- **EDUCD105:** Reimbursements to make reduced-price school meals free **HOUSE**
- **EDUCD137:** Transfer of state K-12 education governance **HOUSE**
- **DOHCD32:** Prohibit sale of flavored tobacco products **EXECUTIVE**

This budget is an opportunity to invest in improving the quality of life of all Ohioans. AOF and our partner organizations support policies that build an Ohio where all people and families live healthy lives in quality communities with pathways to prosperity for all. Thank you for your consideration of the aforementioned provisions.

Sincerely,



Kelsey Bergfeld  
Director, Advocates for Ohio's Future