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*Child Enrichment Services • Family Support Services • Senior Enrichment Services • Shelter and Emergency Services*

Testimony before the  
OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
FINANCE COMMITTEE  
Subcommittee on Health and Human Services

Respectively Submitted By:

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Neighborhood Alliance

On behalf of:

Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging

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Thank you Chairman Representative Mark Romanchuk and Ranking Member Representative West and members of the Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, for this opportunity to testify in support of increasing the Senior Community Services Line Item (ALI 490-411) in the Ohio Departments of Aging's Budget from the proposed \$8.1 million to \$10 million for the next two years.

My name is Amy Anderson and I am the Director of the Senior Enrichment Services for Neighborhood Alliance in Lorain County. Neighborhood Alliance has been serving Lorain County since 1927 with an inspired mission of enhancing neighborhoods. Neighborhood Alliance continues to expand its programs and services to address the diverse and changing needs of families and individuals alike. One of the ways we do this is supporting seniors in our county. We offer supportive services, caregiver support, and socialization at the Oberlin Senior Center. In 2018, 460 seniors visited the Senior Enrichment Services of Oberlin each month to engage in these services.

Prolonged isolation and loneliness can increase abuse and exploitation of seniors as well as have an equivalent health risks of smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Supportive Services and Senior Centers help to decrease these risks. For example, Kathy, a retired nurse whose family lives out of state drives to the center to socialize with her peers. She volunteers at the senior center twice a week, enjoys free lunches and games.

In 2018, five staff drivers provided consistency delivering 5 meals a week for a total of 81,116 Home Delivered Meals (HDM) to over 500 unduplicated older adults throughout Lorain County. Today,

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we have 400 people waiting to receive Home Delivered Meals. How many more of Ohio's seniors will be suffering from food insecurity in five years?

What we do know is that in 2035 we must be prepared to address the population shift for the first time in the nation's history, when the population of adults 65 and older will outnumber children younger than 18 according to AARP Livable Communities. The basic need of one hot meal a day is not the only provision our drivers provide. Steve, is a 93 year old veteran that is a retired steel worker and lived in Lorain all of his life. His driver Phil takes out his trash and brings in his paper daily since Steve is no longer able to navigate the stairs. What will happen to the growing veteran population as they age and are no longer able to cook for themselves or do a simple task of retrieving their paper?

For the health and wellbeing of our aging population I urge you to support the increase in the Ohio Departments of Aging's Budget from the proposed \$8.1 million to \$10 million.