

Testimony Before the House Ways and Means Committee  
Tuesday, March 10, 2015

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Chairman McClain, Ranking Member Cera and members of the Ways and Means Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you today. I am a near Westside Clevelander by choice, a widow with a \$1415 check every month. I've watched my neighborhood grow poorer. Many single seniors receive little more than \$500.00 a month.

My granddaughters charter school has a 97% poverty rate. Bright kids loving to learn, having computers in school but few have them at home. While expanding the sales tax to additional services may be a good idea, increasing the sales tax ½% is not. That may not seem like a lot but when you add up all different sales taxes, Cleveland now pays 8%. This month I spent \$15.30 in sales tax on utilities and Dish. I will spend at least \$125.00 on taxable items.

Yes everyone pays sales tax but low income families have a smaller percentage of their paycheck to spend on taxable and will spend much more than I do on basic taxable items. Prices keep going up; kids need new tennis shoes. Mom's get the shoes and have to make cheap hot dogs and Mac n Cheese for dinner.

We understand expenses must match revenue. As such, we support taxes but fair taxes. Ohio's progressive income tax is fair. It's based upon your earnings. No more cuts, it's been cut too much already. These tax dollars are needed to restore former cuts and increase many programs like an increase in eligibility for childcare subsidy from 200% to 300% of poverty level.

So many families can join the workforce. People want jobs. We need roads fixed and increased funding for public transportation so people can get to where the jobs are.

Ohio has lost over 80,000 jobs. Income tax cuts and the 350 million a year tax break to small business hasn't produced many jobs. Ohioans don't leave Ohio because of Income taxes any more than Oil and Gas Companies stay out of states with fracking taxes.

We support the 6.6% Severance tax and it should require a fee to restore the land. Oil and Gas Companies will say prices are down right now and an increase in the tax will hurt their budget. Why should Ohioans continue to hurt to protect their bottom lines?

In the last quarter of 2014, 779 of 828 drilled wells produced 3,558.36 barrels of oil and 164 billion cubic feet of natural gas. That's tax dollars wasted. We need a Severance Tax that meets the needs of Ohioans in this budget. Carefully review all Oil and Gas tax proposals to make sure if we increase the fracking tax we don't decrease others.

Ohio taxpayers want their tax dollars spent wisely. They must provide the necessary services all Ohioans need. We want to be assured our children, our seniors, and our most vulnerable have programs in place so they too have a safe and healthy life. It can be done. It takes a commitment and a fair tax system.

Thank you so much for your time.