



## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 12-6-18

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Testifying on Bill Number: HB 402

Testimony: ☐ Verbal ☐ Written ☒ Both

Testifying As: ☐ Proponent ☐ Opponent ☒ Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Before  
The Ohio Senate  
Public Utilities Committee**

**Testimony On House Bill 402**

**By**

**Mary Ellen Nose  
Southeastern Ohio Legal Services  
December 6, 2018**

Good morning Chair Beagle, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding House Bill 402, particularly with attention to the potential increase in cost of basic telephone service to Ohioans who do not have access to, or cannot afford, wireless telephones.

My name is Mary Ellen Nose. I am a paralegal with the Southeastern Ohio legal Services (SEOLS), Athens Area Office. SEOLS is a non-profit legal aid office representing 30 counties mostly in rural Southeastern Ohio. The Athens Office covers the counties of Athens, Gallia, Meigs, Morgan, Noble, Vinton and Washington. We have an area office in: Chillicothe (covering Fairfield, Fayette, Hocking Jackson, Pickaway, Pike and Ross Counties); New Philadelphia (covering Coshocton, Guernsey, Holmes and Tuscarawas Counties); Newark (covering Knox, Licking, Muskingum and Perry Counties); Portsmouth (covering Adams, Lawrence and Scioto Counties); and Steubenville (covering Belmont, Carroll, Harrison, Jefferson and Monroe Counties). A map of our service area is attached to show a large portion of Ohio that will be impacted by House Bill 402 if the bill passes as it now reads.

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I reside in Vinton County, which has one stoplight in the county seat, the Village of McArthur. There are no cities in the county, but rather townships and villages. Vinton County has no hospital and the nearest one is ½ an hour away from my home. It is further for the others within Vinton County, and is probably similar in other counties noted above. Much of my county has no water other than wells; no sewer systems; no fire hydrants; no cable; no reliable cell phone and/or internet service, if any at all; and, no PUCO-regulated company services such as natural gas and electricity (we are served by electric cooperatives and bottle gas companies). Many of the above services are things taken for granted in more metropolitan areas.

What we do have, currently at least, is access to somewhat reliable basic local landline telephone service; which is what many in the 30 county Appalachian Ohio area rely upon, particularly through the Federal Lifeline Program. Landline service is the only available service in some areas and is the only affordable service in other areas. Many rural residents cannot afford cell phones. Many are not able to obtain free cell phones and limited minutes offered through the Lifeline Program because of the lack of cell phone service at their homes.

My concern with House Bill 402 is the allowance of telephone companies to increase monthly charges for basic landline service, including Lifeline customers, by \$2.00 each year for four years, with unlimited increases, thereafter. This would impact all customers, but particularly adversely affect those on fixed or low incomes. Many portions of the 30 counties identified earlier rely on basic landline services for emergencies, to contact medical and home health care providers, as well as their children's school and their families and friends.

Ohio residents need reliable, affordable telephone service in order to be able to contact family, schools, doctors, and employers. Basic service is plain telephone service without any extra features and is what those on fixed or low incomes can afford. For most, telephone service with many features is unaffordable. Cell phones, which once were free, are particularly not affordable to those on fixed incomes. Costs of phones are now billed in the monthly bill and spread out over a period. By the time one is paid for it is outdated.

I would like to give examples of how any increase in the cost of telephone service affects those on fixed incomes. Example 1: a single parent with one child in Ohio presently receives \$395.00 in Ohio Works First (OWF) cash benefits per month. This OWF payment is already far below the 100% federal poverty level, which is \$802.00 per month. The payment standard for OWF has gone up, from \$355.00 per month in 2009, to \$395.00 in 2018. From this amount, a

family must pay for their rent, utilities, clothing for the family, gasoline and other car expenses, and other items such as bath and dish soap, laundry detergent, paper towels, over-the-counter-medication, diapers, etc. Currently, the amount allocated for telephone expense in a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP also known as food stamps) budget is \$39.00 per month. The telephone allowance in food assistance was increased to this amount in recent years from what once was \$13.00. The level of assistance a household receives in OWF benefits, which is well below the poverty threshold, has not been substantially increased in many years. Example 2: The same rules apply for determining Food Assistance for any household, including those households on other fixed incomes such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which currently is \$750.00 per month for one person, up from \$674.00 in 2009. Attached are ODJFS' Standard Help Sheets for 2009 and 2018 which also shows the SSI payment amounts. Example 3: Households on other fixed incomes such as Social Security Retirement, Veterans Benefits, etc., would be affected similarly.

House Bill 402 could result in Ohio residents paying more for less reliable telephone service (i.e., spotty cell phone service). The proposed changes, if enacted, will have a detrimental effect on the people living in rural Appalachian Ohio as well as those in Ohio living on fixed incomes. I urge you to consider the above when voting on House Bill 402.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.

# Ohio Telecom Association



- |                   |                      |                     |                        |                       |                                 |
|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| (1) Arcadia       | (8) CenturyLink      | (15) Doylestown     | (22) Kalida            | (29) Oakwood          | (36) Telephone Service Co       |
| (2) Arthur Mutual | (9) Champaign        | (16) Farmers Mutual | (23) Little Miami      | (30) Orwell           | (37) United of Indiana          |
| (3) AT&T Ohio     | (10) Chillicothe     | (17) Fort Jennings  | (24) McClure           | (31) Ottoville Mutual | (38) Vanlue                     |
| (4) Ayersville    | (11) Cincinnati Bell | (18) Frontier       | (25) Middle Point Home | (32) Pattersonville   | (39) Vaughnsville               |
| (5) Bascom Mutual | (12) Columbus Grove  | (19) Frontier North | (26) Minford           | (33) Ridgeville       | (40) Wabash Mutual              |
| (6) Benton Ridge  | (13) Conneaut        | (20) Germantown     | (27) New Knoxville     | (34) Sherwood Mutual  | (41) Windstream Ohio            |
| (7) Buckland      | (14) Continental     | (21) Glandorf       | (28) Nova              | (35) Sycamore         | (42) Windstream Western Reserve |

# CASH/SNAP AND CHILD CARE PROGRAM STANDARDS

Child Welfare Services

FY18

SNAP Assistance

Child Care

AG Size	OWF Initial Elig. Test 7/1/17 (TOWF)	OWF PMT STD 1/1/18 (TOWF)	OWF Alloc. Allow. 100% 7-1-97	PRC FPG 100% 1/26/17	PRC FPG 200% 1/26/17	FA Allot 10-1-17 (TTFP)	130% Gross Std. 10-1-17 (TFSS)	Net Std. 10-1-17 (TFSS)	165%* Gross 10-1-17 (TFSS)	200% Gross 10-1-17 (TFSS)	Std. Ded. 10-1-17 (TTFP)	Fam. Size	FPL 2017 100% 10/1/17	Max Inc. 130% 10/1/17	Max Inc. Trans 150% 10/1/17	Max Inc. Ongoing 300% 10/1/17
1	503	289	583	1005	2010	192	1307	1005	1659	2010	160					
2	677	395	802	1354	2707	352	1760	1354	2233	2707	160	2	1354	1760	2030	4060
3	851	483	980	1702	3404	504	2213	1702	2808	3404	160	3	1702	2213	2553	5105
4	1025	596	1210	2050	4100	640	2665	2050	3383	4100	170	4	2050	2665	3075	6150
5	1200	698	1417	2399	4797	760	3118	2399	3958	4797	199	5	2399	3118	3598	7195
6	1374	776	1578	2747	5494	913	3671	2747	4532	5494	228	6	2747	3571	4120	8240
7	1548	868	1761	3095	6190	1009	4024	3095	5107	6190	228	7	3095	4024	4643	9285
8	1722	962	1954	3444	6887	1153	4477	3444	5682	6887	228	8	3444	4477	5165	10330
9	1896	1058	2149	3792	7584	1297	4930	3793	6257	7584	228	9	3792	4930	5688	11375
10	2070	1153	2345	4140	8280	1441	5383	4142	6832	8280	228	10	4140	5382	6210	12420
11	2245	1246	2532	4489	8977	1585	5836	4491	7407	8977	228	11	4489	5835	6733	13465
12	2419	1342	2727	4837	9674	1729	6289	4840	7982	9967	228	12	4837	6288	7255	14510

\*Used only to determine whether elderly and disabled AG members and their spouse who live with others, qualify for separate AG status.

## MEDICARE PREMIUM (1/1/17)

\$ 134

## SSI PMT. (1/1/18)

Single \$ 750  
Couple \$1125

## SNAP ASSISTANCE 10/1/17 (TFEP)

Standard Shelter Estimate Homeless \$143  
Earned Income Deduction 20%  
Excess Medical Deduction \$ 35  
Dependent Care Deduction No Limit  
Minimum Monthly Allotment \$ 15  
Standard Utility Allowance \$530  
Limited Utility Allowance \$342  
Single Utility Allowance \$ 76  
Standard Telephone Allowance \$ 39  
Limit on Shelter Deduction \$535

To find the Medicaid Standards Help Sheet Link:

1. Click on Medicaid from Innerweb home page.
2. From Medicaid Innerweb home page click on County Resources.
3. Then click on Eligibility Technical Assistance and Compliance and scroll down to **Medicaid Standards Help Sheet**

# STANDARDS HELP SHEET

## OWF and PRC

## CFC Medicaid

## Food Assistance

AG Size	OWF Initial Elig. Test 7-1-09 (TOWF)	OWF PMT STD 1-01-09 (TOWF)	PRC FPG 100% 1-23-09 (THST)	PRC FPG 200% 1-23-09 (THST)	OWF /CECM Alloc. Allow. 100% 7-1-97	LIF FPG 90% 1-23-09 (THST)	LIF FPG 100% 1-23-09 (THST)	Healthy Start 150% 1-23-09 (THST)	Healthy Start 200% 1-23-09 (THST)	TMB 2 <sup>ND</sup> Mo. 1-23-09 (THST)	F.A. Allot 4-1-09 (TIFP)	130% Gross Std. 10-1-09 (TFSS)	Net Std. 10-1-09 (TFSS)	165% Gross 10-1-09 (TFSS)	200% Gross 10-01-09 (TFSS)	Std. Ded. 10-1-09 (TFEP)
1	452	259	903	1805	583	813	903	1354	1805	1670	200	1174	903	1490	1805	141
2	608	355	1215	2429	802	1093	1215	1822	2429	2247	367	1579	1215	2004	2429	141
3	763	434	1526	3052	980	1374	1526	2289	3052	2823	526	1984	1526	2518	3052	141
4	919	536	1838	3675	1210	1654	1838	2757	3675	3400	668	2389	1838	3032	3675	153
5	1075	627	2150	4299	1417	1935	2150	3224	4299	3976	793	2794	2150	3547	4299	179
6	1231	698	2461	4922	1578	2215	2461	3692	4922	4553	952	3200	2461	4061	4992	205
7	1387	780	2773	5545	1761	2496	2773	4159	5545	5130	1052	3605	2773	4575	5545	205
8	1543	864	3085	6169	1954	2776	3085	4627	6169	5706	1202	4010	3085	5089	6169	205

\*Used only to determine whether elderly AG members and their spouse who are also disabled and who live with others, qualify for separate AG status.

## MEDICAID DEPENDENT CARE DEDUCTIONS 10-01-08 (TAEF)

## FOOD ASSISTANCE 10-01-09(TFEP)

\$175/Child/Incapacitated adult full-time  
 \$200/Child under age two full-time  
 \$120/Child/Incapacitated adult part- time

**MEDICARE PREMIUM 1-1-09 \$96.40**

## MEDICAID (TMEP & TMNA)

Standard Shelter Estimate (Homeless)	\$143
Earned Income Deduction	20%
Excess Medical Deduction	\$35
Dependent Care Deduction	No limit
Minimum Monthly Allotment	\$16
Standard Utility Allowance	\$588
Limited Utility Allowance	\$352
Single Utility Allowance	\$79
Standard Telephone Allowance	\$36
Limit on Shelter Deduction	<b>\$459</b>

## MEDICAID RESOURCE LIMIT

## MEDICAID NEED STD

1-1-09

## SSI PAYMENT

1-1-09

Single	\$1500
Couple	\$2250

Single	\$589
Couple	\$1011

Single	\$674
Couple	\$1011

## QMB NEED STD

3-1-09

## SLMB NEED STD

3-1-09

Single	\$903
Couple	\$1215

Single	\$1083
Couple	\$1457

<b>DEEMING</b>	
Spouse-Child	\$163
1 Parent	\$325
2 Parents	\$488

## QMB/SLMB RESOURCE LIMIT

## Qualified Ind. I

3-1-09

## QWDI

3-1-09

Single	\$4000
Couple	\$6000

Single	\$1219
Couple	\$1640

Single	\$1805
Couple	\$2429

Program Policy Services Section Revised 8/2409

<b>NURSING HOMES 1-1-09 (TMEP &amp; TMNA)</b>	
Special Income Level	\$2022
Protected Resource Amount (PRA) Minimum	\$21,912
Protected Resource Amount (PRA) Maximum	\$109,560
Maximum MMMNA	\$2739
MMMNA	\$1821
ESA	\$546
Utility Standard <b>Effective 10/1/09</b>	\$588
SIMNA (HCBS Waiver)	\$1315
Family Allowance	\$1821
Average Monthly Private Pay Rate	\$6023
Assisted Living Maintenance Needs (ALMNA)	\$674
MBIWD Individual Resource Limit	\$10,580
MBIWD 150% FPL	\$1354
MBIWD 250% FPL	\$2257