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Accurate as of 5/7/21



Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes, and other distinguished members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee, my name is Jim Mullen, President and CEO of United Way of Summit & Medina. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on Amended Substitute House Bill 110.

I write to express my support to include \$2 million of funding for the 211 program in the FY 2022-2023 State Operating Budget. State funding would sustain current services and expand 211 to counties without access or with limited access to 211 services across Ohio (36 counties). Funding would be provided to United Way of Greater Cleveland and the Ohio Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS).

211 is a free, 24/7/365 service for individuals who live in Ohio. Live 211 navigators receive calls from individuals and match the callers' needs to available resources in their community, such as employment, food, housing, utility assistance, counseling, substance use treatment, legal assistance, tax preparation, and health care. During the COVID-19 pandemic, United Way of Summit & Medina has handled 143,748 contacts for Summit, Medina, Carroll, Harrison, Jefferson, Lorain, Portage, Stark, and Tuscarawas counties.

The pandemic created an increased need for health, mental health, substance use, employment, and social services, highlighting the necessity for 2-1-1 access statewide. In 2020, Ohio's 211s handled over 830,000 requests for help from residents across Ohio. Families reached out to 211 for assistance in a variety of areas, including 239,000 requests for food, 135,000 requests for help with housing, and 121,000 requests for mental health or substance abuse treatment. Without connection to 211, these individuals may have ended up in emergency rooms, shelters, or other costly state programs.

211 is a critical service to our communities, and we have seen the important work they do around the state since the beginning of the pandemic. We urge you to support this critical budget request to help aid in the health, emotional, and financial recovery of our communities and state.

Respectfully,



Jim Mullen
President & CEO

BOLD GOALS. BIG RESULTS.