



May 25th, 2023

The Honorable Matt Dolan
Chair, Finance Committee
Ohio Senate
Ohio Statehouse
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Dolan and Members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee—

On behalf of the staff, volunteers and, most importantly, the individuals who receive assistance from us, I am writing today to express support for Amendment SC-1325 (Kunze), which would provide funding to the Hilliard Food Pantry. This would provide a small, but meaningful investment in the central Ohio region and I am hopeful the Senate will adopt this amendment.

The Hilliard Community Assistance Council is a 501(c)(3) organization that manages the Hilliard Food Pantry. Our mission is simple: To improve the well-being of our community by providing food and support. The Hilliard Food Pantry was formed in 1960 and first incorporated in 1963. Annually, we see more than 10,000 visits from throughout Franklin County. In 2021, we had 438 volunteers dedicate nearly 10,000 hours of time to assist in the fulfillment of our mission. Our 2021 Annual Report provides additional details on our impact: https://www.hilliardfoodpantry.org/uploads/1/2/4/1/124120579/hcac_annual_report_2021_3_.pdf

Amendment SC-1325 would provide \$75,000 in each fiscal year through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The Hilliard Food Pantry received funding from TANF in HB 110 (134th) as a subgrantee for the Make-A-Day Foundation. Our vision for these funds is as follows—

- Providing benefit application assistance to pantry members, including help with SNAP and Medicaid;
- Helping to provide utility assistance to our members;
- Offering evidence-based education for individuals in poverty to help them rise above their circumstances and find permanent employment.

We have a track record of success in utilizing TANF funds for these purposes. Between April 2022 and October 2022, as a partner with Make-A-Day, we assisted with 248 Medicaid applications, 434 SNAP applications, and 1,089 resource referrals to other benefit clinics. Our goal is to be much more than a food pantry and we currently provide services to 7 zip codes in the region.

In closing, Amendment SC-1325 is a small but meaningful way that the Ohio Senate can support our work. It is my hope that this funding can be included in HB 33. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Erin West, LSW
Executive Director
Hilliard Community Assistance Council