

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE TESTIMONY
Lisa S. Courtice, Ph.D.
President & CEO, United Way of Central Ohio
May 31, 2023

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Substitute House Bill 33. In particular, I am here today to discuss HB 33's budget provisions regarding the United Way Collaborative offered through **Amendment # SC1772**.

My name is Lisa Courtice and I have served as president and CEO of United Way of Central Ohio for six years. Our United Way serves the residents, students and communities in Franklin County. Additionally, United Way of Union County is our affiliate. I am also proud to serve as the president of the Board of Directors of Ohio United Way that serves the 61 United Ways, raising funds to support the needs of your constituents throughout Ohio.

Ohio is faced with a crisis that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. It is widely understood that literacy rates have plummeted, which presents a significant threat to Ohio's future. Research states, a high school diploma is the greatest predictor that one will not live their life in poverty. Moreover, reading proficiently by the end of third grade is the greatest predictor that one will graduate from high school.

The 2021-2022 Ohio Department of Education State Report Card indicates 40% of Ohio's third graders were not reading proficiently. In some districts it's as many as 70% of third graders who are not reading proficiently. I urge you to continue to invest in and expand strategies to address this ongoing crisis in Ohio. If we don't, my United Way colleagues and I are gravely concerned about the implications of this failure on future rates of high school dropouts, crime, unemployment, homelessness, and increased need for public support.

I ask you to support a \$1.8 million per fiscal year appropriation to fund the United Way Collaborative. This annual appropriation will afford the six (6) United Ways, serving ten (10) Ohio counties, the capacity to expand our early literacy and family stability strategies and reach 25,000 additional children and their families. We align our goals for increased proficiency with each school district in which we are engaged. These goals range from annual increases from 20 to 30 percentage points.

As one example in this collaborative, with additional funding that will be provided through this appropriation is that United of Central Ohio will expand its reach by increasing its support for communities in seven (7) Central Ohio school districts. It is our role to convene local out-of-school partners and community organizations, such as the Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA, and the local library system(s) to collectively agree on strategies to support children and their families. We convene community stakeholders to agree on a

common goal, hold the communities accountable to its respective goals, monitor data analytics, and marshal the resources to ensure our collective is positioned to be effective in increasing reading proficiency.

It is imperative that the State of Ohio continue to invest in attracting and preparing a ready workforce. A ready workforce doesn't begin in middle or high school. It begins at the cradle where research shows that brain development is at its peak. Literacy and kindergarten readiness is the foundation to creating a strong Ohio workforce. The six (6) United Way agencies and our partners agree that this is a modest investment that will pay significant dividends in the future and our collaborative strategies are a strong example of how we prepare Ohio to meet the unprecedented opportunities for economic growth.

Thank you again Chairman Dolan and members of the committee for the opportunity to speak with you today. At this time, I am prepared to respond to any questions, points of clarifications or comments that the Chairman or other members of the committee may have regarding our current work, the requested funding and project impact of the United Way Collaborative.

Sincerely,

Lisa S. Courtice, Ph.D.
President & CEO
United Way of Central Ohio

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May 30, 2023

The Honorable Matt Dolan
Chairman, Ohio Senate Finance Committee
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor - 127
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Budget Amendment SC1772 – United Way Collaborative

Dear Chairman Dolan,

On behalf of the undersigned collaborative of United Way affiliates that serve vulnerable residents, families, and households across ten counties in Ohio, we thank you for your stewardship of valuable public resources toward the most effective and sustainable interventions supporting early childhood education and family stability initiatives.

We write to you today to urge you to support a \$1.8 million per fiscal year appropriation to directly support the strongest community-based organizations in the following counties:

Clark	Champaign	Delaware	Fairfield	Franklin
Madison	Morgan	Muskingum	Perry	Union

The ability to impact so many Ohioans on their journey toward family stability with thriving children who are ready to learn is the result of a regional collaborative that aligns the shared vision, mission, and values of United Way of Central Ohio; the United Ways of Delaware, Fairfield, and Union County; the United Way of Clark, Champaign, and Madison Counties; and the United Way of Muskingum, Perry, and Morgan Counties.

The requested funding will expand the capacity of each community to increase and deepen implementation of proven early childhood education initiatives that result in measurable and positive outcomes for students attending area schools.

Funding will also strengthen each community's ability to implement programs that focus on enhanced case management for improved family stability. It will improve the ability of the most effective local community partners to respond to the ongoing needs of families and households experiencing economic hardships and to assist them in economic security and stability.

By supporting this United Way collaborative, the Ohio Senate affirms that the social and academic challenges unique to each community are met by solutions that are equally as diverse - all of which are designed and implemented by their own local and trusted service providers.

But investing in the United Way collaborative goes far beyond directly supporting community-based programming that will improve the lives of thousands of Ohioans. This annual appropriation will serve as a critical catalyst for United Way to mobilize additional financial resources from businesses, individuals, and foundations – the foundation of our work, now and into the future.

The support and inclusion of this budget amendment will represent an important, crucial public-private partnership that will braid multiple resources in each community to achieve stronger impact, much greater than what would otherwise be achieved through siloed efforts. By investing in the United Way collaborative, the state of Ohio will not only benefit from the accountability, experience, and trust of the United Way model, but more families will access an enhanced, holistic safety net of support and more of our community's earliest learners will achieve grade-level reading proficiency and be on a path toward success.

We look forward to working with you and the Ohio Legislature to ensure that this appropriation will generate additional investments, enhanced capacity, and most importantly, increased impact in each community of the United Way collaborative. This means more vulnerable Ohioans accessing critical, holistic family stability interventions, and more of our children receiving effective, evidence-based literacy programming.

As community leaders working together across ten counties, we request your support and advocacy of this critical investment towards the brighter future of so many Ohio families and children. Support and inclusion of this amendment allows United Way the opportunity to mobilize and align the resources, talent, and strength of its citizens, neighbors, and businesses across this region.

On behalf of the United Way collaborative, we thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lisa S. Courtice, Ph.D.
President and CEO
United Way of Central Ohio



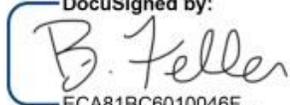
United Way
of Central Ohio



Kerry Lee Pedraza
Executive Director
United Way of Clark, Champaign, and Madison
Counties

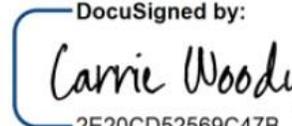


United Way of Clark,
Champaign & Madison Counties

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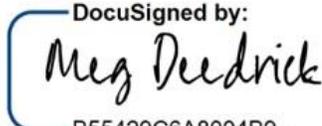
Brandon Feller- MBA, CFRE
President
United Way of Delaware County



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Carrie Woody
CEO
United Way of Fairfield County



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Meg Deedrick
Executive Director
United Way of Muskingum, Perry,
and Morgan Counties



United Way of
Muskingum, Perry &
Morgan Counties

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Michael Irving
Advisory Council
United Way of Union County

United Way
of Union County



CC: Sen. Jerry C. Cirino, Vice Chair
Sen. Vernon Sykes, Ranking Member
Sen. Louis W. Blessing, III
Sen. Andrew O. Brenner
Sen. Hearcel F. Craig
Sen. Theresa Gavarone
Sen. Paula Hicks-Hudson
Sen. George F. Lang
Sen. Nathan H. Manning
Sen. Bill Reineke
Sen. Mark Romanchuk
Sen. Kirk Schuring

_____ moved to amend as follows:

1 After line 160330, insert:

2 "GRF 600XXX United Way Collaborative \$1,800,000 \$1,800,000"

3 In line 160334, add \$1,800,000 to each fiscal year

4 In line 160376, add \$1,800,000 to each fiscal year

5 After line 160762, insert:

6 **"Section 307.____.** UNITED WAY COLLABORATIVE

7 (A) The foregoing appropriation item 600XXX, United Way
8 Collaborative, shall be distributed to the following six United
9 Way partner agencies to serve vulnerable residents, families,
10 and households in the counties within their jurisdictions:

11 (1) United Way of Central Ohio;

12 (2) United Way of Fairfield County;

13 (3) United Way of Union County;

14 (4) United Way of Delaware County;

15 (5) United Way of Clark, Champaign and Madison Counties;

16 (6) United Way of Muskingum, Perry and Morgan Counties.

17 (B) These partner agencies shall use these funds as
18 follows:

SC1772

19 (1) To expand implementation of the evidence-based Success
20 By Third Grade Program and other related proven early childhood
21 education initiatives that result in measurable and positive
22 impacts on student achievements;

23 (2) To collaborate with schools, community organizations,
24 and other entities to achieve a measurable impact on student
25 achievement evidenced by improvements in academic performance,
26 attendance, reduced discipline rates, and other relevant
27 metrics;

28 (3) To implement programs that focus on enhanced case
29 management for improved family stability, with an emphasis on
30 programs that measurably impact academic and nonacademic
31 outcomes for children and youth;

32 (4) To support capacity-building to enhance sustainability
33 and to increase the ability of the United Way partner agencies
34 and their community partners to respond to ongoing needs of
35 residents to ensure consistent access to vital programming,
36 resources, and services in their respective communities;

37 (5) To maximize and augment existing program funding,
38 services, and resources to provide additional supports to
39 families and households experiencing economic hardships and to
40 assist them to reach economic security or viability."

41 The motion was _____ agreed to.

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SYNOPSIS

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Department of Job and Family Services

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Sections 307. __ and 307. _____

45 Appropriates \$1,800,000 in each fiscal year in GRF ALI
46 600XXX, United Way Collaborative. Requires funds to be
47 distributed to six United Way partner agencies to serve
48 vulnerable residents, families, and households in the counties
49 within their jurisdictions. Requires funds to be used to:

50 (1) To expand implementation of the evidence-based Success
51 By Third Grade Program and other related proven early childhood
52 education initiatives that result in measurable and positive
53 impacts on student achievements;

54 (2) To collaborate with schools, community organizations,
55 and other entities to achieve a measurable impact on student
56 achievement;

57 (3) To implement programs that focus on enhanced case
58 management for improved family stability;

59 (4) To support capacity-building to enhance sustainability
60 and to increase the ability of the United Way partner agencies
61 and their community partners to respond to ongoing needs of
62 residents;

63 (5) To maximize and augment existing program funding,
64 services, and resources to provide additional supports to
65 families and households experiencing economic hardships and to
66 assist them to reach economic security or viability.