



**Opponent testimony submitted to the  
Senate Finance Committee  
Sub. House Bill 33  
Torey Hollingsworth, Executive Director of the Ohio CDC Association  
Paul Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of CleveLawn-Home  
June 8, 2023**

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on Substitute House Bill 33. My name is Torey Hollingsworth, and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio CDC Association (OCDCA), a statewide membership organization of nearly 300 locally-based rural and urban nonprofits that work to rebuild neighborhoods through initiatives such as economic development, affordable housing, financial education and local food access.

I ask for your reconsideration of removal of \$1 million each fiscal year for the Main Street Job Recovery Program, which was created in the last budget to provide grants for nonprofit organizations that address the economic needs of individuals and families through the creation of permanent business development and employment opportunities. This bottom-up approach to economic development focuses on job creation for Ohioans while rebuilding Main Streets by addressing priorities such as blight remediation, vacant properties, housing, and the reentry population.

One of the award recipients is with me today, I'd like to introduce Paul Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of CleveLawn-Home to share his insight.

Thank you, Chairman Dolan and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to speak with you today. As Torey mentioned, my name is Paul Fitzpatrick, and I am the Executive Director of CleveLawn-Home, a nonprofit in Cleveland that was started in May of 2019. Our mission is to reduce poverty and violence in our community by providing meaningful workforce development opportunities. CleveLawn-Home specializes in training Justice-involved populations, at risk youth, people in active recovery, and the homeless in full property and ground maintenance, small-scale residential and commercial renovations and equipment maintenance and repairs.

The grant we received from the Main Street Job Recovery Program has allowed us to create three full time and two part time positions for individuals from our target populations. In my conversations with these individuals, I've been told that their employment and training have provided them with the economic means to start to pull their lives out of distress, which in turn has provided them with a sense of pride, belonging and purpose. It has also helped our community because as these individuals started to receive paychecks, they became less dependent on social



services and started to pay into the very systems that supported them in the past; SSI, state and federal taxes, etc.

The work we do at Clevelawn is not measured in the amount of grass we cut or repairs we do; it is measured in the number of fines paid, licenses issued, paroles and probations completed or not, homes stabilized, and lives changed for the better. I know this because I am not just the person privileged to lead this organization, I am also a restored citizen after serving over 18 years in prison and having recently celebrated 25 years in active recovery myself. Because people like my mentor, the Ohio Parole system and more than a few educators believed in me, I have the privilege today to present our organization and our successes to you. My organization today gets to make a difference in our communities in part because of the funding provided by the Main Street Job Recovery Program. It has changed the lives for the better of individuals that otherwise would not have had such an opportunity.

Removal of this vital program is short-sighted, and I ask for you to reinsert this funding into the omnibus version of the budget. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.