



Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies

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Testimony before the Senate Ways and Means Committee February 15, 2023

Philip E. Cole
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Good afternoon Chair Blessing, Vice Chair Roegner, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. I am Phil Cole, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies. I thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of S.B. 39.

The Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies represents Ohio's forty-eight Community Action Agencies serving every county in Ohio. Community Action Agencies are the primary providers of services to eliminate poverty and to assist those who suffer its ravages as they work to become self-sufficient. We provide a variety of services to our low-income customers including job training and placement, Head Start, affordable housing, health care, transportation, home weatherization, rent assistance and many others. Prior to COVID, Community Action Agencies served over 600,000 individuals with revenues over half billion dollars each year. We also employed over 8,500 people. Since COVID, the numbers of people we served and funds we used have dramatically increased, but I am more comfortable stating the annual numbers of pre-COVID times.

As we reviewed S.B. 39, we believe it to be a simple way to relieve some of the financial burden on new parents and families, especially low-income families. For example, on average, a child uses more than 2700 diapers in their first year of life, costing between \$500-\$1300 depending on variables like brand and bulk purchasing. Eliminating the sales tax from the purchase of diapers alone will be a big benefit for families. Including cribs, baby carriers and related products will make them somewhat more affordable. We see S.B. 39 as a common sense initiative from the General Assembly to new families. It is good legislation.

We commend Senator Schaffer for introducing this legislation and urge for its passage.

Philip E. Cole
Executive Director, Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies