

13th March 2025
Finance Committee
HB-96 Testimony

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, Ranking Member Sweeney, and Members of Finance Committee of the Ohio House of Representatives:

Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality, aka NOBLE, was formed in 2003 in response to Governor Taft's state budget cuts. Since then, NOBLE has been the bridge to connect northern Ohioans and our budget legislation. **This is Loh from Cleveland, Ohio.** As A NOBLE Steering Committee Member, Loh is glad to have this opportunity, together with other NOBLE members, to come talk to you all directly about our lives and experiences impacted by various decisions made at the Ohio Statehouse.

Tax Dollars are Dollars from the Public, therefore, Public Dollars.

Public Dollars should Go Back To the Public by Investing the Public!

Throughout, at least, the past 5 decades, the entire country has evolved, societal issues have been popping up, and the economy has gone through ups and downs making small dents and big holes in Ohio. All state legislators have started facing more of the unknown and various conflicting voices in order to make more complicated decisions than before. However, the said principle to make decisions on all legislation today, including how to spend Ohio Tax Dollars & what to spend Ohio Tax Dollars for, should also be **based on the best interests of the Majority of the Ohioans.**

Who are the majority of Ohioans nowadays? How have the majority of Ohioans been nowadays? The majority of the Ohioans are the ones struggling through the Recession from 2008 and due to the COVID-19 in the past 5 years! Why? Because the way how our tax dollars are re-distributed has NOT reflected the needs in reality for the majority of Ohioans for A long time!

Even though almost all the same services have been funded with Tax Dollars, the following practices make the funding **Defeat the Purpose:**

1. **Privatising Public Goods & Services to Worsen Accessibility and Burden the Taxpayers:** The trend to fund infrastructures, projects/programmes, and services has been using Public Dollars to Pay for PRIVATE Choices which are NOT what the Majority of Ohioans have access to

The Past Examples:

- Intel
- First Energy
- Professional Sports Teams

2. **Assistance based on Eligibility / Qualifications vs Assistance based on**

Needs: When encountering Long-Term economic down-times, the funding decisions and the public policies of programmes and services which may be adequate for economic up-times just cannot provide the assistance in time to people in need. Instead, the hard-working Ohioans are left without assistance in time to fall down into bigger & deeper hardships which are actually Harder to get out of.

- NO prevention to keep Ohioans from economic hardships in the first place
- [COVID-19] Benefits Cliff
- Unmet Needs, eg Child Tax Credit Program, Kinship Care Program, Child Care Program, SNAP, TANF

3. **Linear View on Line Items vs Integrated View on Line Items:** The trend to continue keeping budget line items **calculated with outdated formulas, not reflecting the current reality and needs**

- Soaring Rent, Soaring Property Tax ... etc should be considered to Increase Funding for Housing Tax Credit Program, Homeless Services
.....
- Due to the Aging population increase, Not Only the funding for adult and senior services should be increased, But Also the funding for Medicaid and Public Transit ... etc because the seniors may start having more health issues while maintaining their independence to be more self-sufficient.

4. **Spending vs Investing:** The trend ALSO NOT to fund sufficient investment into the **Environment and Public Transit** to Affect the Budget for Building A Better Ohio

This is needed for not only this generation of Ohioans but also the generations to come so they can be a healthy, educated, and capable workforce contributing to the community and celebrating our lives in Ohio together!

- Natural Habitats are becoming Waste Dumps from / for corporations to ruin soils for agriculture and our health, eg **East Palestine & Ashtabula**.
- Pollution can be decreased with properly funded public transit for our health and the environment, in addition to the expenses to maintain roads and bridges, the waste of land use for parking spaces only, traffic congestion ... etc. At the same time, investments in public transit increase the accessibility and effectiveness of the investment in health & human services, public schools & higher education, housing & job opportunities, arts & culture ... while naturally stimulating our economy to build wealth for the majority of Ohioans can be increased.
- <https://time.com/6255769/wales-roads-building-projects-climate-change/>

Please contact NOBLE with any questions you may have via (216) 505-1127. Thank you for being the guardians of the public dollars on our behalf, and thank you for listening to us, the Ohioans!