

Chair Gross, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Baker, and members of the House Medicaid Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Lara Flaute. I am a nurse practitioner who has personally benefited from the Medicaid expansion in Ohio. I strongly urge you to remove two troubling items from Ohio's state operating budget. Both could have devastating impacts on Ohio families who depend on Medicaid expansion for their healthcare coverage.

Specifically, I'm asking you to remove the following two items:

- [Section 126.70](#) — This Medicaid Trigger Language could immediately end Medicaid expansion in Ohio if the federal government reduces its share of paying for the program's costs.
- [Section 126.10](#) — Under this Federal Mirror Language, if the federal government pauses, suspends, or reduces funding for a federal program, Ohio could do the same to any similar state level program that uses federal funds.

In 2014, I returned to Ohio after 2 years serving my country as a Peace Corps Teacher in Sierra Leone. The Medicaid expansion allowed myself and my husband, also a returned Peace Corps volunteer, to secure health insurance as we settled back into life in Ohio. You may not know what it's like to be uncertain of how you're going to pay medical bills, but we do and I can tell you that gaining health insurance through the Medicaid expansion was a huge burden off of us. It allowed me to get treatment for an infection shortly after returning home, and allowed my husband to job hunt and find the right fit for him, rather than taking the first job offered to him.

As a nurse practitioner, I can inform you that the Medicaid expansion saves lives every day in our state and keeps Ohioans healthier than they would be without it. Emergency rooms are already full several days every month, and losing this expansion will greatly increase the number of people seeking emergency care rather than getting help before their problems become emergent. Preventive Healthcare strengthens our public health as well. Everyone in the state benefits from the expansion of Medicaid.

I ask you to consider my testimony and remove these two items from Ohio's operating budget. It is in the best interest of everyone in Ohio to protect these benefits, not to mention keeping over 700,000 Ohioans insured.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Lara Flaute
Certified Nurse Practitioner
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