

## Interested Party Testimony

### HB 96 - Make state operating appropriations for FY 2026-27

Thank you, Chair Gross, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Baker, and members of the House Medicaid Committee, for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 96. My name is Sara Zandvakili. I am a Cincinnati native, constituent of Lucas County, and medical student pursuing Obstetrics and Gynecology. I strongly urge you to remove two troubling items from Ohio's state operating budget. Both threaten 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.

Medicaid Ohio saves lives. The field of Obstetrics and Gynecology is one in which Medicaid coverage is essential, as we must ensure safe pregnancies and health outcomes for both parents and babies. I have personally enrolled a teenage patient in Medicaid after she presented to our student-run free clinic well into her first trimester with no prior prenatal care. It is essential to cover patients like her who do not have insurance and require routine care that dramatically affects health outcomes. According to Medicaid Ohio, over 50% of births in Ohio are covered by Medicaid. Nearly 20% of mothers covered by Medicaid are smokers, compared to <3% of mothers on other insurance. Access to prenatal care, routine screenings, health education, and lifesaving interventions for pregnancy complications like preeclampsia and gestational diabetes are essential for having a healthy pregnancy. Without Medicaid coverage, many pregnant Ohioans are at risk of worse maternal and infant health outcomes. As a state, we must commit ourselves to improving health outcomes for mothers and all patients. I want to practice in a state that prioritizes maternal health and values the well-being of its most vulnerable people.

I ask you to consider my testimony and remove these two dangerous items from Ohio's operating budget. All Ohioans deserve quality health care, and we must safeguard the Medicaid program. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the legislative process and for your attention to my concerns regarding this legislation.

Ohio Medicaid Report on Pregnant Women, Infants and Children – SFY 2020:

<https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/medicaid.ohio.gov/Stakeholders,%20Partners/ReportsandResearch/Ohio%20Medicaid%202020%20Pregnant%20Women%20Infants%20and%20Children%20Report.pdf>