

3/4/2025

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

My name is Catherine Ryczek, of Waynesville Ohio. Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am 35 years old, disabled with a life threatening condition, and am on Medicaid. Recently, I have been able to get on social security disability, but as many may not know, it takes a minimum of two years to get on SSI/SSDI. During that two year wait, I could not work. Medicaid has been essential to keeping me alive and receiving care. Additionally, when you get on social security disability, you cannot get on Medicare until after *two years* of being on disability. So, currently, I am on Medicaid still. And I will die without access to it.

Thus, I ask today for you to remove two very concerning items from Ohio's state operating budget. Both items could have catastrophic impacts on people like me, and Ohio families who depend on Medicaid expansion for their healthcare coverage.

**I am asking you to remove the following two items:
Section 126.70 and Section 126.10.**

Section 126.70: This Medicaid Trigger language insinuates that Medicaid expansion could immediately end in Ohio if the federal government cuts Medicaid federal funding by even 10%.

Section 126.10: Using "federal mirror language," if the federal government pauses, suspends, or reduces funding for a federal program, Ohio may take similar actions with respect to any state-level program that relies on federal funds.

There are over 770, 000 Ohioans that rely on Medicaid for their healthcare. That is 1 in 6 Ohioans. Any types of removal would be devastating for countless people, and result in immediate and tremendous suffering or death. Every single Ohioan will either suffer directly, or will know a loved one who will. The outcry, pain, and grief would absolutely cripple our society and economy—we cannot simply pull the rug out from under so many who rely on it. Most people do not even know this trigger bill is being considered.

Healthcare funding in the budget should be the very last thing to be cut. Most don't understand until it is too late: that our health is the truly the only thing we have in life, and everything else comes second. As someone who may face death without accessible healthcare, I know this reality intimately—and I am afraid. Thinking about this trigger bill, and federal cuts keep me awake most nights crying about my fate, and the fate of so many other loved ones. All I want is to feel safe in my home state of Ohio, but I feel as if I am living every day on borrowed time.

I ask you to consider my testimony and remove these two detrimental items from Ohio's operating budget.

By doing so, you would save me, and the lives of more than 770,000 of Ohioans. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.