

March 3, 2025

House of Representatives, State of Ohio

Medicaid Committee

Chair Gross, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Baker and members of the Committee. My name is Gail Long and I am a member of Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality/NOBLE. I have been a member of NOBLE for over 20 years and as a member have supported our primary goals of bringing the voices of Ohio's most vulnerable citizens to the Biennium Budget process and to protect services which meet the every day needs of individuals and families. These services include but are not limited to affordable housing, food, utilities, public transportation, public education, public assistance and physical and mental health. NOBLE has not only focused on protecting these services, but to expand them through the increase in revenue in a fair and just manner. We have advocated for protecting the income tax and have spoken out against lowering the tax rates for those most able to pay. We have also supported a refundable child income tax credit for many years.

Today, I am focusing my remarks on the importance of protecting the State's Medicaid Program. I urge you to protect the Medicaid Expansion program. 770,000 Ohioans will lose access to health care services if the State eliminates Medicaid Expansion. These 770,000 Ohioans will become sicker and some of them will die. Providers throughout the State may have to close their doors or drastically reduce services. Hundreds of staff will lose their jobs. The economics of such a devastating elimination will hit hard not just in urban areas, but most certainly in rural areas where local clinics and hospitals are often large employers for the town/county.

I ask that you NOT support Governor DeWine's trigger language that accompanies his Medicaid Expansion proposal in his budget submitted to you in early February. Yes, the Federal Government could lower its payment match which is now at the 90-10% level. A 1% decrease, going from 90% to 89% would cost the State approximately \$84 million. This alone could be funded by the "Rainy Day" fund. This would be a wise investment on behalf of 770,000 people.

In addition to Medicaid Expansion, I also urge you not to make any cuts to the Medicaid program that covers families and children. 1.61 million people's health would be threatened. We must invest in families and in particular children. If we do not protect the children in our State then we will not have a healthy future.

We have not elected you to diminish the potential of our sisters and brothers and the State in which we live. You have been elected to serve all of us and to give us the tools to become good and strong citizens of the State of Ohio. We expect that you will take the high road by protecting Medicaid.

Thank you.

Gail Long

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