

## **Che Gadison Testimony**

### **Medicaid Committee- HB 96 Medicaid Expansion**

**March 5 2025**

Good afternoon evening Chair Gross, Vice Chair Barhorst, Ranking Member Baker, and Members of the Medicaid Committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to give testimony on HB 96, and to speak specifically about proposed cuts to Medicaid expansion.

My name is Che Gadison and I am a member of the Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality. As a taxpaying Ohioan, it is beyond frustrating that I have to lobby this committee to provide medicaid coverage to Ohioans who need it. Life happens, and your socio-economic circumstances can often dictate the severity of these changes and one's ability to bounce back. When tax dollars are deducted from my paycheck, it is done so with the belief that when and if ever life happens and unforeseen circumstances happen that the state that I support will support me back.

Currently, 3 million Ohioans are enrolled in Medicaid because they cannot afford other healthcare options or cannot access the needed services for their specific health condition or chronic illness. Ohioans living in poorer communities are the most likely to be negatively affected by cuts to Medicaid expansion. Ohioans rely on the state to provide basic health needs when unforeseen circumstances like job loss, injury or serious illnesses occur. As it is the taxpayers responsibility to the state to pay taxes, it is the State's responsibility to provide the resources and tools Ohioans need to achieve this end. It is quite simple, sick people can't work and if you can't work, then you can't pay taxes.

With many of the residents who are already enrolled in Medicaid many are currently employed and still living below the federal poverty line. It is nearly impossible for most Medicaid enrollees to afford private healthcare costs, or any other alternative medical coverage without these expansion programs. To threaten the medical coverage and healthcare of over 3 million Ohioans is not something that I would expect our elected lawmakers to do. In fact, I would expect that all the members of this committee would stand with the people of Ohio and declare that Ohio's Medicaid programs are not a piece in

a chess game to be sacrificed or bargained with. These are Ohioans' lives, their health and the ability to work and be productive citizens of this great state. Preserving and improving the healthcare of Ohioans should be paramount to this committee and its only concern, not whether or where to make cuts to its programs. Health care and Medicaid expansion programs are not a luxury; they are a basic necessity that addresses our residents basic health needs. Medical insurance and coverage is something every American is entitled to and should never be on the chopping block. The state of Ohio has done a better job in providing Medicaid coverage to its citizens than many other US states and I ask that you continue this good work by increasing support for Medicaid expansion programs and providing more financial support to accommodate the medical and other essential needs of Ohio's vulnerable and less fortunate residents.

I thank you for your time.