

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 Arie Goodman. I am a lifelong resident of Ohio who is acutely aware of the importance of Medicaid and Medicaid expansion as the lifeline for hundreds of thousands in our state. I strongly urge you to remove two sections from Ohio's state operating budget and make the health of our neighbors the main priority in your decision-making. The inclusion of these items 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.

Medicaid plays a vital role in providing healthcare access to millions of low-income individuals and families. For traditionally marginalized communities, particularly Black, Brown, Indigenous, and rural populations, Medicaid is even more critical.

Systemic barriers such as racial wealth gaps, employment discrimination, hospital closures, and disparities in private insurance coverage disproportionately impact people of color and those living in rural areas. These communities are also plagued with disparities in the prevalence of certain health conditions as well as the quality of health care that they receive. Changes to improve these conditions are needed, not legislation seeking to further undermine the system by lessening access to care.

For many rural communities in our state, hospitals and healthcare providers rely heavily on Medicaid funding to keep their doors open, making a well-funded program essential for both patients and the local healthcare infrastructure. Medicaid covers preventive care, maternal health services, chronic disease management, and mental health care. Without Medicaid, many individuals would be forced to forgo necessary treatment, leading to worse health outcomes and increased emergency room visits, which further strain an already fragile healthcare system and increase the cost of healthcare for everyone, including those with private insurance.

Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been a game changer. It provides access to care to those who previously fell through the cracks, including the unemployed and self-employed, as well as low-wage workers and rural residents. Ohio residents have benefitted greatly from Medicaid expansion. Things are trending in the right direction with reductions in racial health disparities, lower rates of medical debt, and improved overall public health outcomes.

Access to quality healthcare should be a right afforded all citizens. That is the case in all other developed democratic nations. We could do that, too, if we valued the lives of our neighbors as we do our own. Medicaid expansion is insufficient, but it is a move in the right direction. Expanding and protecting Medicaid ensures that all communities, particularly those that have been historically marginalized and geographically isolated, have a fair chance at living healthier, longer lives. This, in turn, benefits our communities.

Please consider my testimony and remove these two harmful sections from Ohio's operating budget. As our elected officials, we rely on you to represent and protect Ohio residents. Nothing is more precious than life. We must protect the nearly 800,000 children and families who are dependent on Medicaid expansion for their health and well-being.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Arie Goodman
OH Resident