

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Lauren Schenk, and I am an organizer with NOBLE. I am writing to strongly urge you to remove the proposed flattening of Ohio's state income tax to a single 2.75% rate from the state operating budget.

Eliminating the top income bracket for those earning over \$100,000 would cost the state billions of dollars. The primary beneficiaries of this policy would be the wealthiest 20% of Ohioans, while the vast majority would see no benefit and would, in fact, suffer from the consequences of reduced state revenue.

Throughout this budget cycle, you have heard from hundreds of individuals and organizations asking for critical investments in the programs that sustain our communities. NOBLE has traveled from Cleveland nearly a dozen times to urge support for essential services like Medicaid, public education, lead safety, kinship care, adult protective services, and public housing.

This tax cut threatens those very programs. It does not just benefit the wealthy, it actively harms everyone else.

This tax cut will be used to keep food out of a child's mouth, to keep the injured uninsured, to keep children uneducated, and to worsen the lives of Ohioans. The need across Ohio is dire. Food banks cannot keep up with demand. Homeless shelters are over capacity. Teachers are buying supplies out of their own pockets. Now is not the time to pull funding away from those who need it most or to remove the means to do so in the future.

You've heard the stories. You've read the data. And you know that budgets are moral documents. They show who we value and who we leave behind.

Please, listen to the testimony of your constituents. Reject the flat tax. Invest in Ohio's families, not just its wealthiest earners.