



1632 Oak Street
Columbus, OH 43205
614-664-7483

Mailing Address:
United Way of Central Ohio
215 N Front Street
Columbus, OH 43215



Will Petrik, RISE Together Innovation Institute
Senate Finance Committee
Testimony on HB 96 (SFY 2026-27 Operating Budget)
June 6, 2025

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Will Petrik. I serve as the Director of Policy & Advocacy at RISE Together Innovation Institute. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

At RISE Together, we believe all of us deserve the resources and opportunities we need to thrive. But right now, working parents are doing everything they can, and wages haven't kept pace with rising costs to support a family.

Over the last 2 decades, the governing majority in Ohio has provided a series of tax cuts for the wealthy and corporations. The outcome is the richest 1% of Ohio households are taking home, on average, over \$52,000 every year in tax breaks. People making less than \$24,000 are paying \$80 more each year in taxes compared to what they did in 2005, according to Policy Matters Ohio.

These tax cuts for the rich compounded over the last 20 years mean that there is nearly \$13 billion each year that is keeping rich people well-resourced. These resources aren't trickling down to most of us. What if that \$13 billion went directly to people who actually need more resources to just get by and afford basic necessities?

The Senate budget proposal includes another tax cut for the rich. This is a \$1.1 billion tax cut that will mostly go to people making over \$140,000 each year. No one with an income under \$100,000 will see a dime, according to Policy Matters Ohio.

We support tax relief, but another tax cut for the rich is a bad idea. Instead, let's target tax relief to working families who need it most. Governor DeWine's proposed \$1,000 tax credit per child under age 7 would provide relief to families making less than \$94,000. Today, nearly 4 in 10 households in Ohio struggle to afford basic necessities, such as groceries, rent, childcare, and healthcare. These are the families that need relief.



Unfortunately, the proposed state budget could make it even more difficult for people who are already struggling to get by. The proposed budget could:

- **Take healthcare coverage away from 770,000 Ohioans**, including over 115,000 adults in Franklin County, by including a "kill switch" that could end Medicaid expansion;
- **Make it harder for people to keep food on the table** by reducing funding to Ohio foodbanks by \$15 million over the next 2 years;

At a time when the cost of groceries continues to rise, now is not the time to pull back support for foodbanks across the state that help make sure our neighbors don't go hungry. Taking away healthcare (pushing people off Medicaid) would mean hundreds of thousands of residents will no longer be able to afford prescriptions and the healthcare they need. It would push more people into medical debt and emergency rooms, straining our healthcare system and local resources.

We need a budget that reflects our shared values—a budget that prioritizes dignity, economic opportunity, and the well-being of all Ohioans. That's why we call on you to support the following budget priorities:

- **Make sure every Ohioan can get the healthcare they need.** Please remove the trigger language and protect Medicaid expansion in Ohio.
- **Help families put food on the table.** Please fully fund food banks in Ohio.
- **Restore tax relief for families who most need it.** Please restore the Governor's proposed refundable Child Tax Credit.
- **Restore the Governor's provision to help more families afford childcare.** Please restore the expansion of publicly funded childcare.

Working families need relief. The richest Ohioans have been getting tax cuts for decades. It's time we invest in the rest of us. We urge you pass a budget that truly supports dignity and economic security of all Ohioans. Thank you for your time and consideration.

