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10th Senate District

Senate Medicaid Committee
Senate Concurrent Resolution 5 – Sponsor Testimony
Tuesday, March 4th, 2025

Senator Romanchuk, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Medicaid Committee, thank you for allowing me to give testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution 5 to urge Presidential support of Medicaid work requirements.

During my eight years in the Ohio House, in each General Assembly, we asked, in some way, shape, or form - that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) allow Ohio to reinstate a work requirement for individuals receiving Medicaid Expansion Benefits.

It has often been put into the operating budget to create a statutory requirement for the Governor to request a reinstatement of work requirements for the Medicaid expansion population. I believe in the first operating budget I voted on in 2015, then Governor Kasich, line-item vetoed the request. We have made subsequent requests, including the latest in the 135th operating budget.

I was pleased to see this weekend that Governor DeWine has once again made the request via the Ohio Department of Medicaid.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 5 is a simple message that the Ohio General Assembly can send to the new administration. The message is that members of the 136th General Assembly support reinstating work requirements for able-bodied adults, under the age of 55.

As the Governor stated in his press release, work requirements will “empower people (to) reach their full potential, we have a responsibility to make sure as many Ohioans as possible are on a pathway toward financial independence. Reinstating our work requirement will promote self-sufficiency, it will give more people the purpose and pride that comes with a job, and it will improve the well-being of Ohio’s workforce.”

I want to put it more simply; millions of Ohioans get up every day and go to work to provide for their families. They sacrifice, they work hard and put in long hours at often very difficult jobs to put food on the table, a roof over their heads, and just as importantly, make sure they can afford healthcare for their families.

In 2013, then-Governor Kasich was able to pass the Medicaid Expansion in Ohio. Today several hundred thousand individuals benefit from free healthcare. The Ohio Department of Medicaid estimates that “in CY 2026 no more than 61,826 individuals will be considered not exempt and not currently working.” These individuals would not be exempt from the work requirements because they are between the ages of 19 and 55, they are not currently working or enrolled in a training program, they do not have intensive physical or mental health needs, and they are not in an alcohol or drug treatment program.

An Ohio Capital Journal article published on January 16th claims that “at least 61,000 Ohioans could lose Medicaid health coverage if work requirements go forward.” I disagree with that headline. I believe that reinstating the work requirements instead would mean that at least 61,000 Ohioans will gain the work experience and/or training they need to become financially independent and a contributor to Ohio rather than a burden to the system.

I believe just as we are helping these folks get the healthcare they need, we also need to be helping them get the work or training they need to rejoin the workforce and help fill some of the 150,000 jobs currently listed on the OhioMeansJobs website. We are doing these individuals a disservice by providing healthcare services without asking them for at least a minimum of 80 hours of employment, education, or job skills training as a condition of continued Medicaid eligibility.

I want to reiterate that this requirement is only for able-bodied adults, who are less than 55.

As the recent press release from the Governor continues, “By encouraging employment and education, this initiative aims to reduce reliance on Medicaid services over time, fostering a healthier and more economically secure Ohio. Studies have consistently shown a strong connection between employment and improved physical and mental health. With more Ohioans engaged in work or advancing their education, the state economy benefits from a stronger, healthier workforce, while Medicaid resources can be preserved for those with the most critical needs.”

Again, I would like to put it more simply, while raising five children, I can tell you that when I required something in return for the many things my wife and I provided our children they grew to understand how life works. When I required them to earn money for gas in the cars they used, they learned about responsibility. And when they attended college, I required that they work to pay at least half the tuition because I wanted them to understand that nothing in life is free. Everything comes with a cost. These are the things that prepared them for life. And they are the things we need to require from Ohioans to help those who are struggling to enhance their quality of life, contribute to healthier communities and become a part of a thriving Ohio Community.

Thank you, Chairman Romanchuk, for allowing me to testify today. I ask you and the committee to help the 61,000 Ohioans by passing Senate Concurrent Resolution 5 which encourages the federal government to reinstate work requirements for individuals described in my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions.