



Youngstown Warren Black Caucus

P.O. Box 51 • Youngstown, Ohio 44501 — 330.727.5758 • 330.881.4162

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May 12, 2025

The Honorable Mark Romanchuk, District 22

Senate Medicaid Committee

1 Capitol Square

1st Floor; Room 132

Columbus, OH 43215

Chairman Romanchuk,

This letter shall serve as the official opposition testimony of the Youngstown Warren Black Caucus to several parts of the current state budget bill, HB 96, that is currently being reviewed in your committee. We ask that you give serious consideration to our objections and make this letter part of the official hearing record.

The funds approved by the House for public schools is insufficient. As Ohio schools continue to struggle, it appears the legislators continue to abandon our students. Funding private schools at twice the amount as public schools with taxpayer dollars is irresponsible and offensive to teachers, students, and taxpayers. For nearly 3 decades, our state has failed to fix school funding as instructed by the Ohio Supreme Court's DeRolph vs State decision of 1997. Instead of taking positive action to ensure Ohio children are given the best education possible, the legislature continues to move further away from adequately funding public education. When Ohioans wonder why children leave the state after graduating high school and never return here to live as adults, you should look no further than the failure to give our children the same opportunity to thrive as other states. It is also why Ohio ranks among the bottom third of U.S. states in secondary education and 41st in higher education.

Additionally, we disagree with the legislature's rejection of Governor DeWine's proposal of \$1,000 childcare tax credit per child for married couples earning less than \$95,000 per year. This budget clearly shows the legislature's priority is not working families.

The proposed changes to Medicaid in this bill fail millions of Ohioans. The General Assembly seems to be obsessed with ending diversity everywhere. Adding language that bans funding of any program that mentions diversity, equity, or inclusion in Medicaid services is simply promoting racism against people of color and defying us to be able to do anything about it.

Diversity and Inclusion is not an anti-white movement. It is in fact the exact opposite. It was always meant to include those who do not look like most Ohioans (who happen to be white) in every aspect of employment, education, housing, and government services. It appears this legislative body is going out of its way to prove it is firmly against including ***all*** Ohioans in these areas of life.

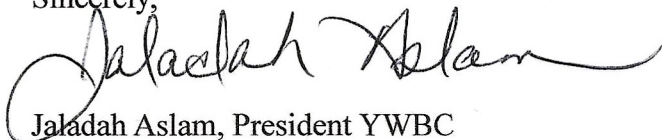
We are also adamantly opposed to ending Medicaid Expansion in our state. Over 770,000 Ohio citizens rely on the program to be able to afford healthcare. We believe it should continue whether the federal government cuts funds to the program or not. For this body to casually disregard the healthcare needs of three-quarters of a million people is embarrassing and cruel!

The act of penalizing any Ohioan who gives money to what the state deems “pregnancy resource centers” is also a problem and we believe unconstitutional. Citizens of our state spoke clearly in the 2023 election that reproductive rights are private decisions. The legislature’s actions to cap income tax deductions for those who donate to those facilities at a lower rate than the rest of the state’s population is petty. That constitutional amendment does not mandate the state fund any of these facilities therefore it should not be an area of the assembly’s concern.

We are also frustrated that the legislature continues to look at revenue from cannabis businesses. Again, the voters spoke clearly in 2023 that local governments would receive 36% of taxes from those businesses. We request that you respect the will of the voters, even if you disagree with the decision we made. It should not be relitigated by the General Assembly.

Lastly, we think it would be a huge mistake to eliminate the Ohio Elections Commission. If all authority is given to an elected Secretary of State or legislature on election matters, we will never be able to trust that decisions are fair to all sides regardless of what political party is in charge. Voters want fairness and respect at every level of government. This continuous re-writing of the rules so you can have complete control is unethical.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jaladah Aslam", with a stylized, flowing script.

Jaladah Aslam, President YWBC

CC: Senator Catherine Ingram, Ranking Member; District 9

Senator Al Cutrona, 33rd District

Rep. Lauren McNally, 58th District

Ohio Legislative Black Caucus