



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

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**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

Judy Dodge  
Deborah A. Lieberman  
Carolyn Rice

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Michael Colbert

February 19, 2021

As the commissioners for Montgomery County, our mission is to create value by investing in people, the economy, and services for all to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives.

The COVID-19 pandemic has added unprecedented challenges in our work. Necessary public health measures and warranted public concerns about the serious risk of the novel coronavirus have drastically impacted state and local economies throughout the nation, including right here in Montgomery County. We're proud of the expedient and collaborative work we have done to partner with the State of Ohio, our local cities and townships, and other public and private partners to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the safety, health, and prosperity of our residents. But make no mistake: the work to mitigate the current crisis and promote an equitable recovery in the long-run remains top of mind and yet unrealized.

We remain amid a crisis unlike any we have seen in modern times. Every Ohioan has assumed new burdens and hardship of some kind over the past 11 months. Some of our community members that have been harmed the most are Ohioans earning low wages in front line jobs and parents – especially mothers – juggling caretaking, lost income, and isolation.

As County Commissioners, we have to use precious and limited administrative dollars to serve our neighbors as effectively and efficiently as possible. We are concerned that Senate Bill 17 would force our county agencies to spend more taxpayer dollars on inefficient and unnecessary bureaucracy. It would place more burden on our local government budgets through a flawed bill. Additionally, it would reject valuable federal food assistance dollars that are spent in our local grocery stores, generating tax revenue and creating and maintaining jobs in our communities. It would make accessing and maintaining SNAP more difficult for the 75,000 Montgomery County residents that currently use SNAP benefits to help feed themselves.<sup>1</sup>

We are particularly concerned about the following provisions:

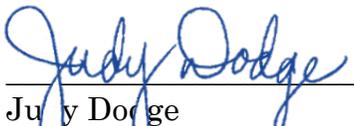
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<sup>1</sup> ODJFS Public Assistance Monthly Statistics, October 2020. <https://jfs.ohio.gov/pams/>

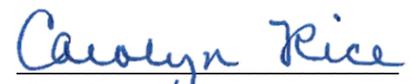
- Eliminating broad-based categorical eligibility (Sec. 5101.546)
  - Our County would be swamped with new requirements for collecting paperwork like bank statements, car valuations, and retirement savings, instead of focusing resources on innovation and economic vitality for all.
  - We want our residents to be able to maintain reliable transportation and build modest assets, like emergency savings, while they recover from the current recession. We believe Senate Bill 17 would create a new asset cliff for hardworking residents in our County, deterring our economic recovery.
- Returning to “change reporting” instead of “simplified reporting” (Sec. 5101.545)
  - Ohio has used simplified reporting for nearly two decades, since Governor Taft adopted it to reduce administrative costs and payment errors.
  - Many hardworking Montgomery County residents work hourly jobs that are contingent from week to week or gig jobs with variable incomes. Collecting information on every small change to their incomes would be exceptionally expensive and time-consuming for our county caseworkers and would punish the very front line workers struggling to stay in their homes and regain stability.

Overall, we oppose Senate Bill 17 because it would erode our ability to respond efficiently to Montgomery County families and individuals in crisis. We believe the State of Ohio should take no action that would limit access to federal food benefits that support our families and local economies, nor any action that would further burden our local recovery.

We urge the Ohio Senate to reconsider the implications that Senate Bill 17 would have for Montgomery County residents and for local government budgets.

  
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Judy Dodge  
Commission President

  
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Deborah A. Lieberman  
Commissioner

  
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Carolyn Rice  
Commissioner