Testimony on Sub. HB 153, The Biennial Budget
Before the Senate Finance Committee
May 18, 2011
By Scott Britton, Coordinator

Chairman Widener, Ranking Member Skindell, and Members of the Committee: My name is Scott Britton, and I am coordinator of Advocates for Ohio’s Future, a statewide coalition of health, human service, and early care & education organizations. AOF works to maintain vital public services at a level that meets people’s basic needs and protects Ohio’s most vulnerable populations.

AOF’s Steering Committee includes more than 20 statewide associations, and our mission has been endorsed by more than 200 organizations across the state.

In the budget before you, we ask that you maintain Medicaid eligibility as well as dental and vision services. We ask you to preserve funding for the Ohio Housing Trust Fund and Federally Qualified Health Centers. In so many other areas, more resources are needed to ensure adequate services in emergency food assistance, child welfare, early care & education, long-term care, behavioral health care, and more.

A safety net already in shreds from four years of state budget cuts cannot begin to handle today’s rising demand for services. The recession has increased the need for basic health and human services at a time when government has fewer resources to provide such services. Long lines at food pantries, steep cuts to public services across the board, waiting lists for care - all point to a need for shoring up Ohio’s safety net. Recent reports on the number of Ohioans living below the level of self-sufficiency reveal a state where too many children, families, seniors, and people with disabilities are vulnerable. Rising food and fuel costs are exacerbating an already urgent problem where one in six of our neighbors is hungry.

If we judge a society by how its most vulnerable are treated, then most of Ohio’s 88 counties fail the test: 70 have more than one-quarter of their population living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, also known as the self-sufficiency level, making them eligible for emergency food assistance and other safety-net services; 26 of those counties have more than 35% of their population eligible. While Ohioans debate the best way to create jobs, poverty and want are growing - moreso among working Ohioans than among the unemployed. We must not leave our vulnerable neighbors behind.
A “Jobs Budget” that reduces unemployment is only part of the answer. The Great Recession has caused the face of poverty to change over the last three and a half years. In fact, many of our neighbors standing in food pantry lines, signing up their children for Medicaid, and relying on other public assistance programs are already working full-time. This budget must offer those working poor who are suffering because of wage stagnation, underemployment, and low-paying jobs a lifeline. They need relief from hunger, homelessness, mental illness, addiction, and other issues so that they can remain self-sufficient until the economy recovers. If we fail to invest in services that ensure an educated, healthy workforce, these Ohioans will be poorly positioned for when prosperity returns. Along with new jobs, this budget should prioritize workforce supports for those who, despite working hard every day, still fail to provide adequate food, health care, and security for themselves and their families.

Adequate investment must support proposed reforms if they are going to be successful. Bold policy reforms to shift services for seniors, people with disabilities, and those requiring behavioral health services away from expensive institutions and into less expensive home- and community-based settings will fall flat if not adequately funded. When those with mental illness and addiction do not receive the help they need in their community, they end up in hospitals, psychiatric wards, and prisons. If seniors and people with disabilities do not receive the services they need to remain independent, they end up in costly nursing facilities. If the budget is to be successful in saving money in the long term by spending less on institutionalized care, then significantly more investments must be made now in the community behavioral health and waiver systems.

Any new revenue identified during the budget process must be prioritized for health, human service, and early care & education programs. Ohioans have enjoyed tax cuts since 2005. The “rainy day” is upon us. If revenue projections increase, then those additional funds must be used to improve vital services for Ohio’s most vulnerable.

On behalf of Advocates for Ohio’s Future, I appreciate your time today. Our coalition members stand ready to work with you to craft budget amendments that will remedy these concerns.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Population below 200% FPIG</th>
<th>Population July 2009</th>
<th>Percent Eligible for Emergency Food</th>
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<td><strong>11,542,645</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.0%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Steering Committee

Co-Chairs
Margaret Hulbert
United Way of Greater Cincinnati

Gayle Channing Tenenbaum
Channing & Associates

Executive Committee
Liz Cornachione
Mental Health Advocacy Coalition
Communications Committee Chair

Lisa Hamler-Fugitt
Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks
Membership Committee Chair

Valerie Ridgeway
United Way of Central Ohio
Public Policy Committee Chair

Mark Davis
Ohio Provider Resource Association

Jon Honeck
Center for Community Solutions
At-Large

Greg Kapcar
Public Children Services Association of Ohio
At-Large

AARP Ohio
Advocates for Budget Legislation Equality
Children’s Defense Fund of Ohio
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development
groundWork
Legal Aid of Southwest Ohio
National Association of Social Workers-Ohio
Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies
Ohio Association of Community Health Centers
Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities
Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Services Providers
Ohio Family & Children First Coordinators Association
Ohio Olmstead Task Force
Ohio Psychological Association
Policy Matters Ohio
Universal Health Care Action Network Ohio
Voices for Ohio’s Children

William Sundermeyer
Brian Larson
Chris Glaros
Cathy Johnston
Ronald J. Rees
David Howard
Col Owens
Danielle Smith
Larke Recchie
Mark Mecum
Julie DiRossi-King
Cheri Walter
Teresa Lampl
Jane Whyde
Deborah Nebel
Bobbie Celeste
Wendy Patton
Cathy Levine
Thomas Scheid
Endorsing Organizations
As of May 17, 2011

Statewide Endorsing Organizations
1. AARP Ohio
2. CareSource
3. Center for Community Solutions
4. Children's Defense Fund of Ohio
5. Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
6. League of Women Voters of Ohio
7. Mental Health Advocacy Coalition
8. National Association of Social Workers-Ohio
9. National Multiple Sclerosis Society Ohio Chapters
10. National Youth Advocate Program
11. Ohio AIDS Coalition
12. Ohio Alliance of YMCAs
13. Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging
14. Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies
15. Ohio Association of Community Health Centers
16. Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities
17. Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks
18. Ohio Citizen Advocates
19. Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services
20. Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage
21. Ohio Council of Behavioral Health & Family Service Providers
22. Ohio Domestic Violence Network
23. Ohio Family and Children First Coordinators Association
24. Ohio GroundWork Campaign
25. Ohio Olmstead Taskforce
26. Ohio Poverty Law Center
27. Ohio Provider Resource Association
28. Ohio Psychological Association
29. Ohio School Based Health Care Association
30. Ohio State Governmental Relations Corp.
31. Ohio Voice
32. Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Ohio
33. Policy Matters Ohio
34. Progress Ohio
35. Public Children Service Association of Ohio
36. The Arc of Ohio
37. Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio
38. Voices for Ohio's Children

Local and Regional Endorsing Organizations (by city)
39. Akron: Alternative Community Services, Inc.
40. Akron: Tri-County Independent Living Center, Inc.
41. Ashland: Ashland County Council on Aging
42. Athens: Athens County Children Services
43. Athens: Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development
44. Athens: Havar, Inc.
45. Batavia: Clermont Community Services, Inc, Jarves Sauls Homeless Shelter
47. Berea: Berea Children's Home
48. Blanchester: Blanchester Community Food Pantry
49. Byesville: Area Agency on Aging District 9
50. Cambridge: Community Treasures
51. Cambridge: Guernsey County Children Services
52. Cambridge: Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center
54. Canton: J.R. Coleman Family Service Corp
55. Canton: Sweet Serenity Homecare
95. Cleveland: Linking Employment, Abilities & Potential
56. Cincinnati: 4C for Children
96. Cleveland: Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry
57. Cincinnati: Anderson Ferry Food Pantry
97. Cleveland: Regional Infant Hearing Program
58. Cincinnati: Beech Acres Parenting Center
98. Cleveland: Starting Point
59. Cincinnati: Caracole, Inc.
99. Cleveland: The Arc of Greater Cleveland
60. Cincinnati: Center for Independent Living Options, Inc.
100. Cleveland: The Center for Families & Children
61. Cincinnati: Cincinnati Arts and Technology Center
101. Cleveland: United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
62. Cincinnati: Cincinnati Deacons
102. Cleveland Heights: Healthy Fathering Collaborative of Greater Cleveland
63. Cincinnati: Cincinnati Union Bethel
103. Columbus: Action Ohio Coalition for Battered Women
64. Cincinnati: Cincinnati-Hamilton County Community Action Agency
104. Columbus: Axis Center for Public Awareness of People with Disabilities
65. Cincinnati: Contact Center
105. Columbus: Baker Nonprofit Management, LLC
66. Cincinnati: Day Star Worship Center
106. Columbus: Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging, AAA 6
67. Cincinnati: Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services
107. Columbus: Channing & Associates
68. Cincinnati: Holistic, Inc.
108. Columbus: Columbus AIDS Task Force
69. Cincinnati: Legal Aid Society of Southwest Ohio
109. Columbus: Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence
70. Cincinnati: Lighthouse Youth Services
110. Columbus: Columbus Women in Black
71. Cincinnati: Mathis Foundation for Children
111. Columbus: Community Research Partners
72. Cincinnati: Ohio Disability Action Coalition
112. Columbus: Council on Healthy Mothers & Babies
73. Cincinnati: Planned Parenthood SW Ohio
113. Columbus: Drug Policy Alliance Ohio
74. Cincinnati: Peace Village
114. Columbus: Early Care and Learning (ECAL)
75. Cincinnati: Pressley Ridge
115. Columbus: Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio
76. Cincinnati: Pro Seniors, Inc.
116. Columbus: Homeless Families Foundation
77. Cincinnati: Southeast Ecumenical Ministry Food Pantry
117. Columbus: Hunger Network in Ohio
78. Cincinnati: St. George Food Pantry
118. Columbus: Jewish Vocational Service
79. Cincinnati: St. Joseph Orphanage
119. Columbus: Molina Healthcare of Ohio
80. Cincinnati: St. Leo Food Pantry
120. Columbus: Progressive Peace Coalition
81. Cincinnati: Talbert House
121. Columbus: Results
82. Cincinnati: The Children's Home of Cincinnati
122. Columbus: St. John's Episcopal Church
83. Cincinnati: The People's Empowerment Coalition of Ohio
123. Columbus: Simply EZ
84. Cincinnati: United Way of Greater Cincinnati
124. Columbus: UMADAOP of Franklin County, Inc.
85. Cincinnati: Urban League of Greater Cincinnati
125. Columbus: United Way of Central Ohio
86. Cincinnati: VRI
126. Columbus: Young Adult Community Development, Inc.
87. Cleveland: Advocates for Budget Legislation Equality
127. Coshocton: Coshocton Help Me Grow
88. Cleveland: Beech Brook
128. Dayton: Artemis Center
89. Cleveland: Benjamin Rose Institute
129. Dayton: Children Have Options in Caring Environments (Choices), Inc.
90. Cleveland: Cleveland Eastside Ex-Offender Coalition
130. Dayton: ComForcare Senior Services
91. Cleveland: Cleveland Foodbank
131. Dayton: Comfort Keepers, Inc.
92. Cleveland: Cleveland Housing Network
132. Dayton: Community Development Corporation Resource Consortium, Inc.
93. Cleveland: Cleveland Tenants Organization
133. Dayton: Drug Policy Alliance of Ohio
94. Cleveland: Community Care Network
133. Dayton: Wright State University Dept. of Social Work
135. Elyria: Easter Seals
136. Elyria: Lorain County Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, Inc.
137. Fairfield: Children's Hospital Medical Center (Fairfield)
138. Fairfield: Shared Harvest Foodbank
139. Findlay: Open Arms Domestic Violence & Rape Crisis Services
140. Gahanna: OCSEA/AFSCME Local 11
141. Galloway: Westland Ecumenical Community Food Pantry
142. Georgetown: Helping Hands in Christian Services
143. Hamden: Agape Food Pantry
144. Hamilton: New Life Baptist Mission
145. Highland Hills: Achievement Centers for Children
146. Hilliard: Serving Our Neighbors (SON) Ministries
147. Hillsboro: Carmel Church of God
148. Hillsboro: Highland County Community Action
149. Hillsboro: Samaritan Outreach Services
150. Ironton: Southern Ohio Behavioral Health
151. Jackson: RSVP of the Ohio Valley
152. Lima: Allen County Children Services
153. Lima: Area Agency on Aging 3, Inc.
154. Lima: West Ohio Food Bank
155. Lisbon: Lisbon First United Methodist Church
156. Logan: Hocking County Children Services
157. Lorain: Child Care Resource Center
158. Lorain: Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio
159. Lorain: United Way of Greater Lorain County
160. Mansfield: District 5 Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
161. Marion: Turning Point
162. Medina: Cornerstone Wellness, Inc.
164. Medina: Solutions Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.
165. Mt. Vernon: Knox County Head Start, Inc.
166. New Philadelphia: Personal & Family Counseling Services of Tuscarawas Valley, Inc.
167. Newark: Pathways of Central Ohio
168. Ottawa: Putnam County Educational Service Center
170. Painesville: Forbes House
171. Piketon: The Community Action Committee of Pike County
172. Portsmouth: Community Action Organization of Scioto County
173. Portsmouth: Senior Employment Center
174. Portsmouth: Shawnee Mental Health Center, Inc.
175. Portsmouth: The Counseling Center, Inc.
176. Ravenna: Family & Community Services, Inc.
177. Rio Grande: Area Agency on Aging District 7
178. Sciotoville: Potter's House Ministries
179. Shiloh: Plymouth Shiloh Food Pantry
180. Sidney: Sidney-Shelby County YMCA
181. Smithville: The Village Network
182. Springfield: The City of Springfield, Ohio
183. St. Clairsville: Belmont County Dept of JFS
184. St. Louisville: House of New Hope
185. Stow: Hope Homes
186. Toledo: Family Service of Northwest Ohio
187. Toledo: Franciscan Shelters DBA Bethany House
188. Toledo: Lucas County Educational Service Center
189. Toledo: Lucas County Family and Children First Council
190. Toledo: Toledo Area Jobs with Justice Coalition
191. Toledo: United Way of Greater Toledo
192. Toledo: Zepf Center
194. Valley View: AHS / Ohio Mentor
195. Warren: ACOP Center
196. Wauseon: Pennington Orchards
197. Waverly: Appalachia New Day Ministers
198. Wellston: Jackson-Vinton Community Action, Inc.
199. West Liberty: Adriel, Inc.
200. Westerville: Concord Counseling Services
201. Worthington: Middle East Peace Foundation
202. Zanesville: Muskingum Counseling Center
203. Zanesville: Six County, Inc.