



## Advocates for Ohio's Future

510 East Mound Street, Suite 200  
Columbus, OH 43215  
614-602-2463 | 614-602-2464 | Fax 614-228-5150  
[www.advocatesforohio.org](http://www.advocatesforohio.org)

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## CONTACT

Gayle Channing Tenenbaum, 614-226-3116  
Mark Davis, 513-218-5991

## ADVOCATES THANK ADMINISTRATION FOR ACTION ON WELFARE OVERPAYMENTS

COLUMBUS – Advocates for Ohio's Future today commended Governor John Kasich for putting a stop to efforts by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to recover 25-year-old welfare overpayments.

The statewide coalition of health, human service, and early care & education advocates worked behind the scenes last week after news broke that the Department had sent 14,000 collection notices to Ohioans demanding prompt repayment for errors the Department itself made. AOF thanked the Governor in a letter for his decision to revert to the Department's standard practice of looking back no more than 10 years. The letter from AOF co-chairs Gayle Channing Tenenbaum and Mark Davis follows:

*On behalf of Advocates for Ohio's Future and the more than 20 statewide networks and associations we represent, we write to thank you for taking swift and decisive action to support vulnerable Ohioans by overturning the effort to recover welfare overpayments going back 25 years. We understand that your office did not set this policy in motion, and we are grateful that you reversed it as soon as you learned about it.*

*The letters demanding repayment affected people who had not committed fraud and who likely did not have documentation going back a quarter-century to confirm or refute the claims. Coming, as they did, just before the holidays, the letters likely caused confusion and added concern for individuals and families struggling because of the economy.*

*We are grateful that you and ODJFS Director Michael Colbert recognized the harmfulness of this action and reverted to prior policy. You listened to the concerns expressed by the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies, the Athens County Department of Job and Family Services, the Ohio Poverty Law Center, and coalition members making up Advocates for Ohio's Future, and you were adamant in your resolve to do the right thing. Thank you for your leadership, and for your concern for Ohio's most vulnerable populations.*

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*Advocates for Ohio's Future works to maintain vital public services – health, human services, and early care & education – at a level that meets people's basic needs and protects our state's most vulnerable populations.*