



## Advocates for Ohio's Future

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### **ADVOCATES PRAY FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND EXTENDED HEALTHCARE COVERAGE IN BUDGET**

COLUMBUS – Over a thousand Ohioans came together to stand up and join hands forming a circle around the Statehouse to pray for changes in the state budget to make Ohio communities healthier. A diverse community came together to pray that lawmakers choose people over politics and extend health coverage to 275,000 Ohioans in the state budget.

Advocates for Ohio's Future Co-Chair Mark Davis noted the diversity of the coalition coming together, "Business leaders, faith leaders, veterans, consumers, advocates, labor groups, and healthcare providers all recognize that extending health coverage in the budget will strengthen our communities and make Ohioans more competitive."

While parts of the Sub Bill passed by the House Finance Committee offer support for health and human services— adding \$6 million (state and federal) for PASSPORT, \$100 million for mental health and drug addiction, and an additional \$4 million for food banks—Advocates for Ohio's Future continues to express grave concern about the decision by the Ohio House to remove the Medicaid expansion plan from the budget.

Advocates for Ohio's Future Co-Chair Gayle Channing Tenenbaum said, "We know this is a challenging issue for lawmakers, but a decision not to extend health care coverage will leave working Ohioans uninsured and harm our competitiveness as a state."

"Today, our thoughts are focused on making our communities healthier," said Tenenbaum, "We will continue to stand up and fight for Ohioans and fight for what is right."

Referring to what the Kasich Administration and House leadership have dubbed the Jobs Budget 2.0, Davis concluded, "A healthy, productive, and educated workforce is vital to position Ohio as a top tier business location. Healthier Ohioans mean a more productive workforce and a more competitive Ohio."

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*Advocates for Ohio's Future is a statewide coalition of over 400 local and statewide organizations that works to strengthen families and communities by maintaining vital public services, including health, human services, and early care & education.*