

October 16, 2007

Dear Member of the Ohio Delegation:

Very soon you will be casting critical votes affecting the health and well-being of people in Ohio. As Ohio community and faith leaders, service providers, and advocates for meeting human needs, we strongly urge you to vote to invest in healthy children, educated workers, and secure families and seniors.

First, 122,000 uninsured children in Ohio urgently need you to vote to override the President's veto of the SCHIP bill (Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act, H.R. 976). These children and all the others who are now healthier because of SCHIP are depending on your vote. Our children cannot learn and thrive if they do not get the health care they need. We will look to your vote to override the SCHIP veto as a true demonstration of your commitment to our state's children.

You will also be voting soon on vital domestic appropriations bills. Please support investments in services that provide our people with opportunity and protect them from harm. The choices before you are stark. We hope the appropriations bills headed towards completion will preserve or expand:

- Head Start, child care, and education from birth through college;
- job training and employment services so our youth and adult workers can get ahead;
- community health centers, maternal and child health services, rural health, and mental health programs;
- services to address family violence, juvenile justice, and the prevention of child abuse or neglect;
- nutrition help for children (Women, Infants and Children (WIC) food program) and the elderly (Commodity Supplemental Food Program);
- services to strengthen communities through the Community Services Block Grant; and
- affordable housing and home energy assistance to provide stability for low-income seniors, people with disabilities, and families.

Vetoes threatened by the President are aimed at cutting these services. We strongly urge you to vote for domestic appropriations bills including Labor-HHS-Education, Transportation-HUD, Commerce-Justice-Science, and Agriculture, and to override such destructive vetoes.

So much is at stake for Ohio. The President wants to force appropriations back down to levels that would for the seventh year in a row cut services for Ohio's communities and families. Instead, your votes should invest in Ohio's future. The House-passed appropriations bill would allow 905 more children in Ohio to receive Head Start than under the President's plan. Similarly, House appropriations would provide funds for 367 more teachers than the President's plan, and would allow \$121 more special education funding for each child with disabilities in Ohio. Although 577,332 households have trouble putting enough food on the table in Ohio, a Presidential veto would be aimed at preventing 5 new states from being part of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and still worse, would stop 13,000 elderly now participating in Ohio from receiving food packages. We hope the House version of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is adopted. In marked contrast, despite soaring energy prices, a veto could mean 75,100 fewer Ohio households will get the help they need to pay their utilities in 2008 than in 2001.

Our neighbors, our children, and the communities we live in and serve all count on you to vote for critically important investments and to reject the cuts the President's vetoes would require. We believe these votes – for SCHIP and human needs appropriations – are among the most important you will cast.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Retired Americans, Bexley

Alliance of Child Caring Service Providers, Cleveland
Call to Renewal of Summit County, Akron
Camp Fire USA Greater Dayton Area Council
Catholic Ministry of Health Care Professionals, Lakewood
Catholic Ministry of Health Care Professionals, Shaker Heights
Center of Hope Family Services, Toledo
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO)
Congregation of St. Joseph, Cincinnati
Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD), Athens
County Commissioners Association of Ohio
Dakota Center, Inc., Dayton
FACES of Stark County
First Congregational UCC: Mission Team, Mount Vernon
HELP (Help End Lead Poisoning), Columbus
Holy Cross Church, Columbus
Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center, Cincinnati
John Carroll Social Justice and Leadership Learning Community, University Heights
Kno-Ho-Co-Ashland Community Action Commission, Coshocton
Leadership Team of Dominican Sisters, St. Mary of the Springs, Columbus
League Of Women Voters, Rocky River
Medina County Health Department
Mental Health America, Barberton
Mental Health America of Summit County
National Council of Jewish Women Ohio State Public Affairs
Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee
Ohio ACORN
Ohio Council of Churches
Ohio Empowerment Coalition
Ohio Fair Schools Campaign
Ohio Federal Budget Coalition
Ohio Jewish Communities
Ohio United Way
OCSEA/AFSCME, Westerville
Over-the-Rhine Marianists, Cincinnati
Pax Christi, Dayton
Potential Development Program, Youngstown
Progress OHIO
RESULTS, Columbus
S.P. NolHin, LLC, Dayton
Sisters of Mercy, Regional Community of Cincinnati
Sisters of St. Francis, Sylvania
Social Work Dept., University of Toledo
St. Henry Health Ministry, Lower Salem
St. John's Episcopal Church, Columbus
St. Thomas More Newman Center, Worthington
The Center for Community Solutions, Cleveland

The Padua Center, Toledo
The Stocker Foundation, Lakewood
The Twelve of Ohio, Inc, Elyria
United Church of Christ, Cleveland
United Methodist, Broadview Heights
United Way of Central Ohio
United Way of Greater Cleveland
United Way of Medina County
United Way of Summit County
Universal Health Care Action Network of Ohio
Ursuline Sisters, Pepper Pike
Ursuline Sisters, Cleveland Heights
Ursuline Sisters, Amherst
USW Local 8530, Shelby
Westwood First Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati
Young Adult Community Development, Inc., Columbus
Youngstown Area Jewish Federation
YWCA Columbus
YWCA of Dayton