



June 27, 2025

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor of the State of Ohio
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: Veto Requests for Ohio's State Operating Budget FY2026-2027

Dear Governor DeWine,

As a statewide, multi-issue, child advocacy organization that has served Ohio's children, youth, and families for over forty-three years, the Children's Defense Fund-Ohio requests your attention to several troubling provisions in the General Assembly's proposed FY2026–2027 state operating budget.

This budget, as currently written, sends a stark and disheartening message: Ohio's children and families are not a priority. At a time when families are struggling to access child care, health coverage, basic necessities, and safe housing, lawmakers have chosen to deliver massive tax breaks to the wealthy and handouts to stadium developers. This budget undermines the future of Ohio's children, but you can still ensure this is not the final word.

When you introduced your executive budget in February, you pledged to invest in "the things that make Ohio the heart of it all"—chief among them, our children and families. As you review the General Assembly's proposal, we call you back to that commitment. This is your final, decisive opportunity to align Ohio's budget with your stated goal of "investing in our greatest asset: our people."

The Children's Defense Fund-Ohio respectfully urges you to use your line-item veto authority to protect the well-being of Ohio's children and families:

- **PRIORITIZE FAMILY STABILITY OVER SPECIAL INTEREST MEGA-PROJECTS. VETO APPROPRIATION ITEM 042428**
 - Public dollars should strengthen neighborhoods, not subsidize billion-dollar stadiums that are profitable for wealthy investors but have limited public return. Reject the provision to provide \$600 million for a new stadium in Brook Park (OBMCD51).

- **MAKE SURE BABIES GET THE CARE THEY NEED. VETO THE REPEAL OF ORC 5166.45**
 - Veto the repeal of the mandate requiring that the Ohio Department of Medicaid seek approval to provide continuous Medicaid coverage for eligible children from birth through age three (MCD41). This would enable children to remain enrolled without an annual redetermination of eligibility, ensuring that Ohio's youngest Buckeyes can thrive. The restoration of the continuous enrollment directive is necessary because studies have shown that Medicaid access as a child positively impacts life-long health outcomes.
- **PRIORITIZE OHIOAN'S HEALTH—NOT FEDERAL PRESSURE. VETO OF OBMCD32.**
 - Give the Ohio Department of Medicaid flexibility to respond to federal funding changes instead of mandating an immediate Medicaid cutoff that would jeopardize care for over 770,000 Ohioans (OBMCD32).
- **PROTECT OUR COLLECTIVE RESOURCES. VETO TAXCD103.**
 - Maintaining strong state revenues is essential to support Ohioans across every stage of life. The proposed changes to the income tax (TAXCD103) would disproportionately benefit the wealthy while harming those most in need. We urge a line-item veto to protect our collective resources and basic stability for working families. Ohio's future depends on fair, sustainable tax policy—not handouts that erode services for all.
- **GUARANTEE EXCELLENT LOCAL LIBRARIES. VETO RDFCD2.**
 - Reject the cutting of library resources and accounting methodologies that will facilitate the underfunding of our public institutions (RDFCD2).
- **PROTECT YOUTH IN THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM. VETO AGOCD41.**
 - Veto the decision to place the OH Correctional Institution Inspection Committee under the Attorney General. This bipartisan, joint-legislative committee provides external oversight of Ohio's adult and juvenile correctional facilities and is one of the only unbiased sources of information about the conditions of confinement for incarcerated youth (AGOCD41).

Thank you for your attention to these matters. With your vetos, you will be putting children first and showing Ohioans that they are indeed at the heart of it all.

In Defense of Our Children,



Dr. John Stanford
CDF-Ohio, State Director

