



STATE BUDGET ANALYSIS

THE OHIO WOMEN'S PUBLIC POLICY NETWORK REVIEWS HOW WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES FARED IN THE ENACTED STATE OPERATING BUDGET

One of the first priorities of the governor and state legislature at the start of a new legislative session is to draft and enact a two-year budget bill for the state of Ohio. The biennial budget is the most important legislation to the operation of our state government, and it is a reflection of the state's priorities and values.

After months of work, and weeks of delay in passing a final budget bill during conference committee negotiations, the House and Senate passed House Bill 166, the two-year state operating budget. The Legislature sent it to the governor shortly before the extended deadline on July 17, and he has since signed the bill into law.

The Ohio Women's Public Policy Network, alongside our coalition partners, advocated for a budget that supports, prioritizes, and invests in women and their families. **Below, we have reviewed how the final budget bill aligns with our top ten budget priorities for Ohio women and families.**

HOW WOMEN AND FAMILIES FARED IN THE STATE OPERATING BUDGET:

Positive Action: The Ohio General Assembly and Governor made incremental progress to move forward a number of our budget priorities for women and families, including:

- **Progress was made to improve the quality of child care in Ohio.** The budget invests \$198 million from the federal Child Care Development Block Grant to improve the quality of Ohio's publicly funded childcare system. The state also included \$10 million for grants to help providers participate in the Step Up To Quality system and support efforts to meet the 2020 and 2025 Step Up to Quality mandates. State lawmakers also made changes to ensure that no child care providers got a rate cut when the reimbursement rates were updated on July 1, 2019. These priorities both align with the governor and state legislature's commitment to fostering quality child care centers and providers. These grants can be used for quality workforce supports, such as wage incentives, professional development, or facilities improvement. It is crucial for workers within the child care sector, who are disproportionately women, to be paid adequate wages and have access to benefits and professional development.
- **Despite early efforts to restrict Medicaid with the inclusion of the so-called Healthy Ohio Program, health care access was ultimately protected.** Medicaid is a crucial lifeline for Ohio women who make up the majority of recipients, and Medicaid has made a monumental difference in health care access and affordability for many women and families. While the budget was being drafted in the House, efforts were made to include Healthy Ohio language, which would have required premiums to access Medicaid and restricted or cut healthcare services, including prescription drugs, for thousands of Ohioans. We joined with health care advocates to push back against this harmful restriction, and the provision was ultimately removed before the House version of the budget -- and lawmakers refrained from adding the language from the final budget bill.
- **The final budget codified the Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review Board (PAMR), which included language that commits the state to improving data collection efforts on maternal mortality.** The United States is the most dangerous developed country for women to give birth, and Ohio's rate of maternal mortality is higher than the national average. Black women face three to four times the rate of maternal mortality as white women as a result of racial disparities in access to and quality of care; discrimination and implicit bias in the health care system experienced before, during, and after pregnancy; and stress and trauma associated with structural and institutional racism. Committing to research and review is a positive first step, and we urge the legislature to continue to address the maternal mortality crisis, particularly in addressing the racial disparities in maternal health.
- **Legislators took positive action to provide funding to programs and services that support survivors and victims of sexual and domestic violence,** specifically the Rape Crisis Fund and the Ohio Domestic Violence Program. The final state budget bill included a line-item for \$4.8 million per fiscal year (\$9.6 million for the biennium) for Ohio's Rape Crisis Center Fund. This increase in funding from previous budget cycles will allow Ohio's 31 rape crisis programs to expand services to cover all 88 counties, a step that will positively impact the lives of thousands of Ohioans. There were also positive actions taken to support domestic violence programs in the state. Previously, Ohio has been one of the few states that did not allocate any general revenue funding to domestic violence programs. The budget bill included a line to allocate \$1 million per fiscal year (\$2 million for the biennium) to domestic violence programs from the steady source of general revenue.

- **Positive steps were made to reduce incarceration and prison overcrowding, funding programs that focus on community-based rehabilitation.** Women are the fastest growing prison population in the United States, and women in state prisons are more likely than men to be incarcerated for drug or property offenses. The budget allocates increased funding toward alternatives to incarceration, and increases funding for medical services for incarcerated individuals. More information from our partners at Policy Matters Ohio on the specific line item values relating to incarceration can be [found here](#).
- **The final version of the budget included an increase of \$1.2 million in funding for the Ohio Bureau of Wage and Hour to more effectively address wage theft.** Wage theft occurs when a worker is not given their legally or contractually promised wages, such as violating minimum-wage laws, failing to pay overtime, or forcing an employer to continue to work after they are off-the-clock. Ohio has the second highest share of workers who are victims of minimum wage violations. Nearly 23 percent of low-wage workers, the majority of whom are women and women of color, fail to receive their full compensation under minimum wage law. The provision was added in the House version of the budget, then stripped from the Senate budget, but ultimately added during conference committee and passed in the final budget bill.

Negative Action: There were a few provisions included in the final state operating budget that moved our priorities in the wrong direction, such as:

- **\$7.5 million dollars of funding from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) fund was allocated to so-called Crisis Pregnancy Centers (CPCs), anti-abortion centers that lie to pregnant women about their health care options.** Investigations into CPCs show that they directly target young women, women of color, and low-income women, using deceptive, aggressive, and dangerous tactics and misinformation. As the budget bill moved from the governor's office, to the House, to the Senate, the funding for CPCs increased with each step. Ultimately, the bill emerged from the Conference Committee with \$7.5 million in funding, a \$6.5 million increase from previous budgets that earmarked funding for these facilities. It was discovered that \$2.5 million of this funding was re-allocated to CPCs from a program designed to decrease infant mortality and improve maternal health by providing LARCs (long acting reversible contraceptives) to low-income women who rely on Medicaid. The decision to fund dangerous CPCs will cause harm to women's health and take crucial funding from TANF away from women and families who need support to make ends meet.
- **The budget continues a tax cut policy that limits other state investments in key areas for women and families.** By maintaining a policy known as the "LLC loophole," which offers a significant tax cut on business income, Ohio loses about \$528 million per year. This \$1.1 billion tax break per biennium would be better used to increase child care assistance eligibility, invest in a refundable Earned Income Tax Credit, or support many other positive programs that would benefit from state funding.

Lack of Action: The State Legislature and Governor failed to take action on a few of our key priorities for the state budget bill, including:

- **While the state transportation budget, passed earlier this year, addressed shortfalls in the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) a crucial policy that has proven to lift working families out of poverty, the operating budget did not make improvements to this key policy.** The transportation budget, which passed out of the Legislature with bipartisan support and was signed by the governor earlier this year, expanded the state EITC from 10 percent to 30 percent of the federal credit, while also removing the cap. However, Ohio's EITC remains non-refundable, which is one of the greatest limitations to the policy, and the Legislature failed to address this shortfall in the transportation budget. The state budget could have addressed this limitation and put money back in the pocket of working families who are trying to make ends meet, however, the legislature rejected amendments throughout the process that would have made these key improvements.

- **The budget did not make any funding allocation for the upcoming 2020 Census.** The results of the 2020 federal Census affect our representation on the national level and determine the allocation of nearly \$33 billion dollars in federal funding for Ohioans. Ensuring a complete and accurate Census count is especially important in Ohio for women and for historically undercounted communities which often rely on the programs and resources determined by the census. Despite the impact that the Census will have on every Ohioan, lawmakers took no steps to allocate funding towards planning for the Census or conducting outreach to ensure a successful and fair count.
- **There were no efforts made to lay the groundwork for a statewide paid family leave program,** which would allow working people to continue to earn a portion of their paycheck while taking leave to care for and bond with a new child, provide care to an ill or aging loved one, or to address their own serious medical concerns. Currently, only 17 percent of American workers have access to any form of paid family leave through an employer, and only 4 percent of low-wage workers have access to a policy. Paid family and medical leave policies provide workers with financial support that they need to take time off of work to care for a loved one or address their own health issue without risking their economic security. Lawmakers could have addressed this gap in policy through the budget making process, but they made no effort to include the issue of paid leave in their priorities.
- **The budget did not include resources to increase access and affordability of child care.** Many working parents can't afford child care and only parents making less than 130 percent of the poverty level (\$27,024 for a family of three) can access public support for child care. Only Indiana and Michigan make it harder to qualify for support. We need to make child care more affordable and accessible to give children a strong foundation to thrive in school and to ensure parents, particularly mothers, can participate in Ohio's workforce. We can do that by raising the eligibility for public child care support to 200% of the poverty level. While increasing eligibility for publicly funded child care remains a stated priority of the DeWine Administration, no funds were allocated to support this goal in the FY 20-21 operating budget.



The Ohio Women's Public Policy Network is a coalition of more than 30 advocacy organizations focused on promoting policies that create economic security for women and strengthen Ohio families. Using a collective voice that represents the women of our state, this network works to ensure that public policy reflects the true needs of women and families.

For more information, visit our website at

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