



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF OHIO**

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Governor John Kasich  
Riffe Building, 30<sup>th</sup> floor  
77 S. High St.  
Columbus, OH 43215

June 29, 2017

Dear Governor Kasich,

The League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO) urges you to line-item veto several provisions of Am. Sub. House Bill 49, the state operating budget for FYs 2018-2019. There are also several provisions we support and ask that you retain in the enacted budget.

First, we encourage you to veto provisions related to the following issues:

Protecting our environment

- Appointment of Oil & Gas Leasing Commission members by legislature – We believe this change allows the possibility of rampant drilling across state and local parks, activity you have wisely held back since the commission’s formation in 2011. Public lands are meant for public use and enjoyment, and allowing oil and gas activity could infringe that utilization.

Medicaid

- Freeze of enrollment in Medicaid expansion – With over 700,000 individuals enrolled Group VIII Medicaid coverage, this program has been a lifeline to struggling Ohioans. It has also provided critical assistance to combat the opioid epidemic, which has hit Ohio harder than almost anywhere else. Even with the changes attempting to exempt those with addictions from the freeze, we feel cutting off this critical access to care would do enormous harm.
- Work requirements for Medicaid enrollees – Cutting out Medicaid applicants who are looking for work or on waiting lists for addiction treatment or job training is counterproductive. Ensuring Ohioans in need get and stay healthy makes our workforce and our state stronger.
- Healthy Ohio program waiver – Requiring Medicaid recipients, by definition people with limited financial means, to pay a monthly premium or risk losing their insurance coverage does nothing to help vulnerable individuals.

Women’s health

- Ohio Parenting and Pregnancy earmarks – With our state facing a billion-dollar budget shortfall, funneling \$1 million to so-called “crisis pregnancy center” facilities that deceptively present themselves as health care clinics gives the appearance of a very expensive handout to anti-abortion activists, which hardly seems like an appropriate investment for a state that is struggling to fund countermeasures to address the opioid epidemic.

LWVO also encourages you to maintain provisions dealing with the following issues:

Elections and voting

- Funds for voting machines – The \$1 million appropriation in this budget will help counties begin to replace aging voting machines that are living on borrowed time and will help ensure our elections run securely and effectively.
- Absentee ballot application mailing – Please preserve the funds appropriated to provide absentee ballot application form mailings to every registered voter in Ohio. Increased use of absentee voting helps reduce stress on aging voting machines and reduce lines on Election Day.

Opioid crisis

- Increased funds for opioid relief – Communities across Ohio need more resources to better fight opioid addiction and support those who are addicted and their families. This should be done while still allocating the funds necessary for local governments to provide other important services, but we appreciate the increase in this budget.

There are also several provisions LWVO was disappointed to see missing from the final version of the budget.

Ohio Housing Trust Fund

- Increase in Ohio Housing Trust Fund – The House-passed version of the budget included an elimination of the cap on the Ohio Housing Trust Fund. As the primary source of support for the homeless and affordable homes for seniors, veterans, and children, the Housing Trust Fund needs more resources. A portion of increased funds would have been directed toward housing for those in addiction treatment and recovery, helping fulfill a need fundamental to those affected by the opioid crisis.

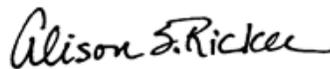
Wind farm setbacks

- At a time when Ohio is acutely aware of the need to grow revenue, advocates for clean energy and business interests had hoped that the state would ease wind farm setbacks to allow more property owners the option to have wind farms. Regrettably that was removed from the budget, but we hope future legislative or executive action might address the issue.

Respectfully,



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