



Legislative Brief

JUNE 18, 2018

THIS IS AMERICA. WE ALL CAN DO BETTER!

As I prepare to retire as the Public Policy Director of the Ohio Council of Churches at the end of the month, I want to mention a few issues that if prioritized by faith groups, could help Ohio stand-out as a place for other states to emulate. I have served the Ohio Senate, State Treasurer and the Ohio Council of Churches for 42 years. I have selected several areas of debate for your own consideration and discussion with others.

The economy was dramatically changed when Trump and Congress moved to provide tax cuts for all. When Senate Republicans introduced their tax bill, they faced competing interests and some Senators thought it wasn't enough for working class families. Others thought it didn't deliver enough for business owners. What began as an effort that would favor the wealthy and corporations became even more in their favor. When they needed a way to limit its impact on the \$1.5 trillion deficit, they made tax cuts for you and me temporary, ending in 2025 while leaving cuts for only corporations to continue. This would require a tax hike on many Americans in the middle of the next decade. In order to pay for corporate tax cuts, they targeted the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate for extinction. This leaves 13 million Americans dropping health insurance, including 5 million on Medicaid. Republicans argued that the average taxpayer would see a 3 or 4% jump in the value of the dollar; however, as of today the dollar value has only gone up 1%.

The Tax Center says that taxpayers earning from \$50,000 to \$75,000 will get tax cuts of \$850 in 2019. Those earning more than \$1 million will get \$34,130 in tax cuts. By 2027, only 5% of taxpayers making up to \$75,000 will get any tax cut.

He has told you, O mortal, what
is good;
and what does the Lord require
of you
but to do justice, and to love
kindness,
and to walk humbly with your
GOD?

(Micah 6:8 NRSV)

**MAY YOUR SUMMER
VACATIONS BE
SAFE AND
ENJOYABLE!**

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**You are welcome to copy or quote
from the Legislative Brief.
Tom Smith, Editor**

During the Presidential campaign, President Trump made immigration the centerpiece of his campaign. However, he reduced refugee admissions to the lowest level since the resettlement program was created in 1980. President Trump cancelled DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) which gave work authorized for 690,000 Dreamers, temporary relief from deportation. Trump ended the temporary protection status for Haiti, Nicaragua, and Sudan in 2018.

The worse case has been for those who cross the border with their children seeking asylum from political violence in their country. They are referred for prosecution and their children are immediately separated from their parents. The American Civil Liberties Union said, "Children as young as 18 months are in danger of suffering life-long trauma. We won't let you shift the blame or use families as bargaining chips for your wall! America must end family separation immediately. The government has already lost track of almost 1500 immigrant children." Most of the children are from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala fleeing drug cartels, gang violence and domestic abuse. Most of America has strongly supported helping DACA kids become citizens; for many, America is the only home they know.

My next concern is America has strongly supported the Food Research and Action Center as anti-hunger advocates have been strong supporters of Farm Bills. FRAC has been a major supporter of summer meals for children who routinely eat breakfast and lunch at school. I have not found a church that hasn't had some role in helping families in their community make weekly trips to the local Food Resource Pantry.

Another program that is now in the trouble in the present Congress is the elimination of Medicaid. In my mind it is the best program that Governor Kasich approved and made

available to all families in Ohio. I have a very hard time understanding those in Congress who want to eliminate healthcare for all. America is the largest country that does not provide healthcare for those unable to cover the cost. It's scary to me that congress, along with Trump, are planning on removing Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security that so many families of seniors depend on. On July 1st Medicaid will be switched to Managed Care Groups of about 150 providers. They are already asking for a 6 month postponement. Greg Moody, director of Ohio's Health Transformation is tracking to see if patients are receiving the care they need. Thus far the denial rate is 6%. The major concern at this time appears to be for those who require mental and behavioral health.

Ohio will get a new Governor in 2019 and the time is now to let both candidates know that we expect that healthcare continues for all.

Medical Marijuana patients are less than 100 days away from Sept. 8th when state law says patients approved can purchase and possess a day supply with a recommendation from a certified doctor. It will be available only in the forms of oils, creams and patches for topical use, edibles on flowers, plant material solely for the use of vaporizing. Our law prohibits smoking or growing at home. The use of marijuana may be delayed because it takes 8 to 12 weeks to grow.

There are 10 major illnesses that can be helped by the oil from marijuana including people with seizures and those with very severe pain. In my house I can verify pain's negative impact on one's life.

It has been a pleasure and an honor over the past 23 years to advocate for all faiths on many topics. I hope that in the future many of you will share your concerns with the new representative as they spend their days at the Statehouse on behalf of the Ohio Council of Churches. †††