

Governor's Letter

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

RE: Request to Line-Item Veto Discriminatory and Non-Fiscal Provisions in Ohio Budget

Dear Governor DeWine,

As individuals, organizations, and businesses committed to the health, economic vitality, and constitutional integrity of our state, we respectfully urge you to use your line-item veto authority to remove six deeply concerning and non-budgetary provisions from the state's biennial budget. These provisions not only fall far outside the scope of fiscal governance but also introduce serious legal, financial, and reputational risks for the State of Ohio.

Specifically, we ask you to veto the following provisions:

1. Language asserting that "there are two sexes, male and female," which are "not changeable," echoing a controversial federal executive order. (see DOHCD 40, R.C. 9.05)
2. A ban on Medicaid funds for mental health services that "promote or affirm gender transition." (see MCD68, section 333.13)
3. Restrictions on state funding for youth shelters that affirm and support transgender youth. (see DOHCD14, section 291.20)
4. A mandate that materials related to sexual orientation or gender identity be hidden from minors in libraries. (see LIBCD5, R.C. 3375.47)
5. A prohibition on menstrual products in men's restrooms of public buildings. (see DASCD53, R.C. 9.561)
6. A restriction on the display of any flag besides the Ohio state flag on state property, including Pride flags. (see DASCD51, R.C. 123.30)

These provisions are not financial in nature. They are ideological directives that deserve to be publicly debated as standalone policy proposals, not quietly embedded in a must-pass budget bill. By bypassing the normal legislative process, these items undermine democratic due process and transparency. The people of Ohio—regardless of political affiliation—deserve the opportunity to weigh in on policies that affect civil liberties, healthcare access, and community services.

In addition to concerns over fairness and legality, these measures carry substantial economic consequences. If enacted, they are likely to prompt immediate legal challenges based on constitutional rights, anti-discrimination laws, and federal Medicaid requirements. Defending the state in court will cost taxpayers millions of dollars—resources that could be better spent addressing real budgetary priorities such as education, public safety, and infrastructure.

Moreover, these provisions signal to workers, employers, and investors that Ohio is a hostile place for LGBTQ+ individuals and the organizations that support them. This has tangible consequences: businesses are less likely to invest, talented workers are leaving the state, and healthcare providers may hesitate to offer comprehensive services in an increasingly restricted landscape. These are not just cultural impacts—they are economic liabilities.

Ohioans deserve a budget that reflects sound financial stewardship and responsible governance, not one weighed down by divisive and discriminatory riders. We urge you to protect Ohio's fiscal health, constitutional integrity, and national reputation by line-item vetoing these unrelated provisions.

Respectfully,

Dr. Lis Regula, Advocacy Associate at [Men Having Babies](#)

Liz Schmidt, Leadership at [Ohio Equal Rights](#)

Ian Neinast, Leadership at [Ohio Equal Rights](#)

Joshua Petty-Keyes, Leadership at [Ohio Equal Rights](#)

Stephanie L. Ash, MSW, LSW, Esq.

Grayson Schultz, Founder of [Chronic Sex](#)

Rev. Dr. Joelle Henneman, Senior Pastor at [Church and Community Development for All People](#)

Liam Strausbaugh, Practice Associate at [National Association of Social Workers - Ohio Chapter](#)

Amelia Elise Green, Ohio Rally Leader at Trans Unity Coalition

Dara Adkison, Executive Director of [TransOhio](#)

Sara McSwords, Pastor at [Beloved UMC](#)

Anna Goure

Katelin Hansen, Deaconess and CFO at [UM Church for All People](#)

David Meredith, Chair of the Board at [Reconciling Ministries Network United Methodist](#)

James Waugh, Retired Ordained Elder at West OH Conference United Methodist Church

Arthur Mills

Dianne Tobey Covault

Glenn Schwerdtfeger, Senior Pastor at [Bethel International United Methodist Church](#)

Shannon Pitorak

Anastasia Martinez, Director of Policy and Campaigns at [Ohio Womens Alliance](#)

Robert English, Lead Pastor at [Clifton United Methodist Church](#)

Amanda Cole, Executive Director of [Plexus LGBT & Allied Chamber of Commerce](#)

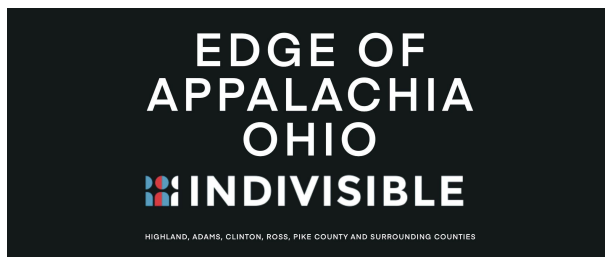
Spencer Matthews, President of UTrans

Kathy Young, long-time member and small group leader at Bethel IUMC

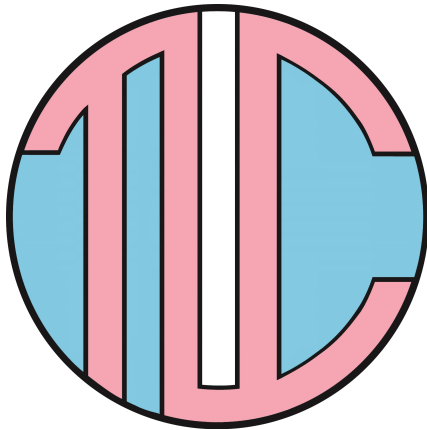
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Karen Muntzing, Senior Pastor of [King Avenue UMC](#)
Angie Cox, Pastor at [Livingston United Methodist Church](#)
Kathleen Yohn, Volunteer at [Honesty For Ohio Education](#)
James Knapp, Board chair at [TransOhio](#)
Taryn Penrose, Lead at [Edge of Appalachia Ohio Indivisible](#)
Annie Burton, Pastor at State Avenue United Methodist Church
Lorraine Wilburn, ED of Action Together Stark
Cathy Erbes
Khris Goins, Founder of [Black Trans Men of Ohio](#)
Geraldine Hartman, Outreach Committee Chair at [Mayday Coalition Project](#)
Dresden Thornweaver
Chester Dickerson, CEO of Chester Dickerson, DOM, LAc, ADS, CFMP
Kristen Santel, Owner of [Santel & Kerr, LLC](#)
Malia Lewis, Board of Education President of Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools
Makiedah Messam, Executive Director of [Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc.](#)
Kimberly Morales, Trauma Therapist at Kimberly Morales, LISWS, LLC
Deborah Cannon, Owner at Deb Cannon Counseling, LLC
Jennifer McNally, Owner
Elizabeth Wagoner



United Methodist Church &
Community Development
for All People





Outreach emails

1. [Giles Allen](#) – Legislative Affairs Director

Subject: Budget Veto Request – Diverse Coalition Invites Further Discussion

Dear Mr. Allen,

Attached is a letter submitted to Governor DeWine, signed by over 50 individuals and organizations from across Ohio, including educators, clergy, mental health professionals, business owners, and advocates. Together, they represent thousands of Ohioans and are urging the Governor to line-item veto six non-fiscal, discriminatory provisions embedded in the biennial budget.

These provisions were not subject to public debate, and their inclusion sends a damaging message to LGBTQ+ Ohioans and their loved ones, many of whom are now seriously considering leaving the state.

If helpful, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, members of the Governor's staff, or Governor DeWine himself. We would be grateful for a conversation about how maintaining legislative integrity and removing these items through proper channels aligns with Ohio's future as a welcoming, economically strong state that draws in residents, businesses, and investment.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

2. [Lindsey Brigano](#) – Deputy Legislative Affairs Director

Subject: Line-Item Veto Request from Diverse Ohio Leaders – Invitation to Talk

Dear Ms. Brigano,

Enclosed is a letter signed by a broad and diverse group of Ohioans- educators, clergy, mental health providers, nonprofit directors, and community leaders- urging Governor DeWine to line-item veto six provisions that have no place in a state budget.

These provisions sidestep public scrutiny and risk harming Ohio's economy and national reputation. The individuals behind this letter represent a diverse cross-section of Ohio's professional and civic community, each concerned about how these measures will affect their communities.

We would be glad to meet with you, other members of the Governor's staff, or the Governor himself to further discuss how removing these provisions through proper legislative protocol would better serve Ohio's long-term health and economic success.

Warm regards,
[Your Name]

3. [Dan Tierney](#) – Press Secretary

Subject: Veto Request from Diverse Coalition of Ohioans – Open to Conversation

Dear Mr. Tierney,

Please find attached a veto request letter signed by more than 50 Ohioans—educators, religious leaders, therapists, social workers, nonprofit professionals, and small business owners—urging the Governor to remove six non-fiscal and discriminatory items from the budget.

These provisions pose real legal, economic, and reputational risks to Ohio, and they deeply affect LGBTQ+ individuals and families. The coalition behind this letter reflects the diverse makeup of our state and the widespread concern about bypassing normal legislative processes.

We'd welcome the opportunity to talk with you, other staff members, or Governor DeWine directly to further explain how striking these provisions helps keep Ohio open, competitive, and economically vibrant.

Respectfully,
[Your Name]

4. [Lisa Peterson](#) – Communications Director

Subject: Letter from Diverse Leaders Across Ohio – Request to Meet

Dear Ms. Peterson,

Enclosed is a letter urging Governor DeWine to line-item veto six budget provisions that sidestep due process and target LGBTQ+ Ohioans. It is signed by over 50 individuals from various sectors of Ohio's society, including clergy, educators, therapists, advocates, and business leaders.

These voices come from across the state and speak not only for themselves, but for the thousands they serve and represent. Their shared concern is that these provisions, if enacted,

would drive people and investment out of Ohio and damage the welcoming image the Governor has worked to promote.

I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you, other members of the communications team, or the Governor himself to explain how removing these provisions through the proper channels supports both human dignity and Ohio's economic trajectory.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

5. [Eve Henson](#) – Deputy Communications Director

Subject: Request to Meet – Diverse Ohioans Concerned About Budget Provisions

Dear Ms. Henson,

Attached is a veto request letter signed by educators, faith leaders, healthcare providers, nonprofit leaders, and others from across Ohio. They are asking the Governor to remove six non-fiscal provisions from the budget that would negatively impact LGBTQ+ people and undermine legislative transparency.

These signers represent a powerful cross-section of Ohioans who want our state to remain open, fair, and competitive. They are deeply concerned that these provisions send the opposite message and risk pushing people and resources away.

If helpful, I would be glad to talk with you, other members of the Governor's staff, or the Governor himself to explain why respecting the normal policy process is vital for Ohio's future prosperity and civic trust.

Kind regards,
[Your Name]

6. [Lauren Niner](#) – Communications & Public Information Officer

Subject: Broad Support for Vetoes – Invitation to Discuss

Dear Ms. Niner,

Please see the attached letter, which has been signed by over 50 individuals, including school leaders, pastors, mental health experts, civil rights advocates, and entrepreneurs. They are urging the Governor to veto six harmful, non-fiscal provisions that were quietly inserted into the budget.

These community leaders are united by a desire to keep Ohio moving forward—welcoming to all, economically attractive, and governed with transparency and integrity. They are also concerned about the potential consequences these provisions could have for families, businesses, and public services.

I would welcome the chance to talk with you, members of the Governor’s team, or Governor DeWine himself about how upholding process and removing these items strengthens Ohio’s path forward.

With appreciation,
[Your Name]

7. [Jill Donahue Del Greco](#) – Senior Communications Advisor

Subject: Open Invitation to Connect – Budget Veto Request from Diverse Ohioans

Dear Ms. Donahue Del Greco,

I’m writing to share the attached letter signed by more than 50 community leaders from every corner of Ohio—faith leaders, therapists, educators, attorneys, and business professionals—united in urging Governor DeWine to remove six divisive provisions from the budget.

These provisions do not belong in a fiscal document. They undermine due process and signal hostility to many Ohioans, especially LGBTQ+ individuals and families. That’s not the Ohio we want to build together.

I’d be grateful for a chance to speak with you, others in the Governor’s office, or Governor DeWine himself about why this matters so much—and how thoughtful policy and protocol can help Ohio thrive for everyone.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

8. [Nathan Takitch](#) – Communications Advisor

Subject: Diverse Community Leaders Urge Vetoes – Let’s Connect

Dear Mr. Takitch,

Attached is a letter from a remarkably diverse group of over 50 Ohioans—including pastors, school officials, nonprofit directors, social workers, and entrepreneurs—asking the Governor to line-item veto six non-fiscal provisions that target LGBTQ+ communities.

This diverse coalition reflects the breadth of concern across the state and across sectors. They believe that proper legislative process—not budget riders—is the appropriate path for debating controversial issues. Their goal is an Ohio where all people, businesses, and families can thrive.

I would be glad to meet with you, other staff members, or the Governor himself to further discuss how this request aligns with the best interests of Ohio's economy and reputation.

Warmly,
[Your Name]

9. [Brad Bales](#) – Senior Legislative Liaison

Subject: Veto Request from Diverse Ohio Voices – Invitation to Talk

Dear Mr. Bales,

Attached is a letter signed by more than 50 Ohioans—teachers, pastors, mental health professionals, legal experts, and small business leaders—urging Governor DeWine to line-item veto six non-fiscal, ideologically driven provisions included in the budget.

These provisions circumvent the normal legislative process and send a troubling message to the LGBTQ+ community. The signers are deeply invested in Ohio's future and are united by a desire to keep our state a place that attracts people and opportunity.

I'd welcome a conversation with you, others on the legislative team, or the Governor himself about why upholding sound policy-making practices is so critical to Ohio's growth and wellbeing.

Best regards,
[Your Name]

10. [Aaron Riggins](#) – Legislative Liaison

Subject: Diverse Leaders Request Vetoes – Open to Meeting

Dear Mr. Riggins,

Enclosed is a veto request letter signed by a broad group of Ohioans—including faith leaders, educators, nonprofit directors, and clinicians—urging Governor DeWine to strike six discriminatory provisions from the state budget.

These items lack fiscal relevance and deserve full debate through the appropriate legislative process. As someone involved in shaping and guiding policy discussions, your voice is key.

I'd be happy to meet with you, your colleagues, or the Governor himself to discuss how preserving protocol on such important matters supports a stronger, more prosperous Ohio.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

11. [Gretchen Craycraft](#) – Legislative Liaison

Subject: Invitation to Discuss Veto Request from Diverse Ohioans

Dear Ms. Craycraft,

Please find attached a letter signed by educators, clergy, therapists, attorneys, and community organizers from across Ohio, urging Governor DeWine to use his line-item veto power to remove six non-budgetary provisions targeting LGBTQ+ Ohioans.

These signers reflect a wide range of sectors and communities. Their concern is not just moral, but procedural—these issues deserve full public input, not quiet passage through the budget.

I would welcome a conversation with you, your colleagues, or Governor DeWine to discuss the importance of process in preserving trust and strengthening Ohio's appeal to residents and businesses alike.

Warm regards,
[Your Name]

12. [Ann O'Donnell](#) – Chief Advisor to the Governor

Subject: Budget Veto Request from Ohio's Civic Leaders – Meeting Invitation

Dear Ms. O'Donnell,

Attached is a letter signed by over 50 civic leaders from across Ohio—pastors, educators, small business owners, mental health providers, and civil rights advocates—calling on the Governor to remove six deeply concerning, non-fiscal provisions from the biennial budget.

These Ohioans are speaking for thousands who are alarmed by the exclusionary message these provisions send. They want to see a budget that reflects fairness, transparency, and strong economic policy.

I would be grateful for the opportunity to meet with you, others on the Governor's senior team, or the Governor himself to discuss the stakes of this decision and how it connects to the state's long-term economic vitality.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

13. [Christine Morrison](#) – Cabinet Affairs Director

Subject: Request to Meet – Letter from Diverse Ohio Leaders

Dear Ms. Morrison,

I'm sharing the attached veto request letter submitted to Governor DeWine and signed by a broad coalition of Ohioans—including educators, ministers, legal professionals, healthcare workers, and nonprofit executives. They ask the Governor to line-item veto six budget provisions that are not fiscal in nature and are harmful in effect.

These provisions, inserted without public debate, threaten both civil liberties and Ohio's ability to retain residents and attract investment.

I'd appreciate the chance to meet or talk with you, other members of the Governor's team, or the Governor directly about why this matters deeply to Ohio's families, workers, and future.

Thank you,
[Your Name]

14. [Stephanie McCloud](#) – Chief of Staff

Subject: Broad Veto Request from Community Leaders – Open to Meeting

Dear Ms. McCloud,

Attached is a letter signed by more than 50 Ohioans—including clergy, school leaders, therapists, civil rights advocates, and business owners—asking Governor DeWine to line-item veto six harmful, non-fiscal provisions from the biennial budget.

These community leaders are unified by a desire to see Ohio grow in both prosperity and fairness. The provisions at hand undermine both.

I would be honored to speak with you, members of the Governor's team, or Governor DeWine himself about how thoughtful leadership on this matter could help build a stronger, more inclusive Ohio.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

15. [Scott Partika](#) – Policy Director

Subject: Invitation to Discuss Veto Request from Diverse Policy Stakeholders

Dear Mr. Partika,

Please find attached a letter to Governor DeWine signed by over 50 Ohioans—educators, clergy, social workers, health professionals, and policy advocates—requesting the line-item veto of six non-fiscal, discriminatory provisions in the budget.

These individuals work daily to serve communities across our state. Their concern is rooted not only in civil rights, but in sound policy practice.

If helpful, I would be happy to speak with you, other members of the policy team, or the Governor about how removing these items and pursuing open debate helps ensure effective, future-facing governance.

Respectfully,
[Your Name]

16. [Meghan Wadsworth](#) – Assistant Policy Director, Economic Development

Subject: Economic Implications of Budget Riders – Invitation to Meet

Dear Ms. Wadsworth,

Enclosed is a letter to Governor DeWine from a diverse coalition of Ohioans—including business leaders, nonprofit professionals, clergy, educators, and healthcare workers—requesting the removal of six ideological, non-fiscal budget items.

These provisions compromise Ohio's ability to recruit talent and investment. We know you understand the link between inclusive policy and economic competitiveness.

I would be glad to speak with you, your team, or the Governor directly about how Ohio's economic development strategy is best served by a transparent, welcoming, and forward-looking policy environment.

Warm regards,
[Your Name]

17. [Marjorie Yano](#) – Deputy Policy Director, Education

Subject: Invitation to Talk – Letter from Educators & Leaders Across Ohio

Dear Ms. Yano,

I'm writing to share the attached veto request letter submitted to Governor DeWine and signed by over 50 leaders across Ohio—including teachers, school administrators, pastors, therapists, and civil rights leaders.

They are deeply concerned about the educational and community-wide impact of six policy riders in the budget that bypass proper debate and marginalize LGBTQ+ Ohioans.

I would welcome the opportunity to talk with you, others on the policy team, or Governor DeWine to discuss how keeping education policy fair and transparent supports stronger schools and a stronger state.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

18. [Caitlan Flis](#) – Assistant Policy Director

Subject: Request for Dialogue – Budget Veto Appeal from Diverse Ohioans

Dear Ms. Flis,

Attached is a letter to Governor DeWine from a broad and diverse group of Ohioans—educators, clergy, mental health professionals, nonprofit leaders, and small business owners—asking him to veto six non-fiscal provisions added to the budget.

These provisions target vulnerable communities and bypass the standard legislative process. The signers of this letter work every day in schools, clinics, congregations, and courtrooms, and their collective voice reflects wide concern about how these measures will impact our state.

I would be glad to speak with you, other members of the policy team, or the Governor himself about how removing these items would support better policy, greater inclusion, and economic opportunity for all Ohioans.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

19. [Matthew \(Matt\) Donahue](#) – Chief Legal Counsel

Subject: Legal & Constitutional Concerns – Invitation to Talk Further

Dear Mr. Donahue,

Please see the attached letter, signed by over 50 professionals from across Ohio—faith leaders, social workers, mental health clinicians, attorneys, educators, and more—urging Governor DeWine to veto six non-budgetary policy provisions embedded in the biennial budget.

These provisions raise serious legal and constitutional concerns, particularly around free expression, due process, and equal protection. The signers believe these matters should undergo public scrutiny and debate—not be passed within a fiscal bill.

If possible, I would be grateful to speak with you, your team, or the Governor about the legal and democratic importance of following proper channels when addressing such high-stakes policy matters.

Respectfully,
[Your Name]

20. [Sarah Ackman](#) – Deputy Chief Legal Counsel

Subject: Concerns About Process & Civil Rights – Request to Meet

Dear Ms. Ackman,

Enclosed is a letter sent to Governor DeWine from a diverse coalition of Ohioans—including attorneys, pastors, healthcare professionals, educators, and nonprofit leaders—urging him to line-item veto six harmful, non-fiscal provisions from the budget.

These provisions carry significant legal and constitutional risks, especially regarding discrimination, free speech, and Medicaid compliance. The signers believe a full legislative process is critical for laws with such far-reaching consequences.

If helpful, I would welcome the chance to meet or speak with you, members of your legal team, or Governor DeWine to further explain the importance of this request from both legal and ethical standpoints.

Best regards,
[Your Name]

21. [Matthew Kelly](#) – Coalitions Director

Subject: Diverse Ohioans United in Veto Request – Invitation to Connect

Dear Mr. Kelly,

Attached is a letter submitted to Governor DeWine by a large and diverse coalition of Ohioans—including organizers, pastors, teachers, social workers, therapists, and nonprofit leaders. These over 50 signers urge the Governor to remove six discriminatory, non-fiscal provisions from the budget.

This coalition represents thousands of residents across the state, united by a desire to build an Ohio that is inclusive, economically vibrant, and rooted in transparent governance.

I would welcome the opportunity to speak with you, other coalition leaders, or Governor DeWine himself to explore how we can work together to ensure Ohio remains a state that people want to live, work, and invest in.

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

22. [Amy Brenner](#) – Executive Assistant to the Governor

Subject: Invitation to Discuss Concerns in Veto Request Letter

Dear Ms. Brenner,

Please find attached a letter addressed to Governor DeWine from over 50 Ohio leaders—including educators, clergy, clinicians, legal experts, and community advocates—urging him to veto six discriminatory and non-fiscal provisions currently included in the state budget.

These individuals represent organizations and networks serving thousands of Ohioans. They are deeply concerned about the message these provisions send and the long-term consequences for our state.

If helpful, I would be happy to speak with you or coordinate a time to meet with members of the Governor's team—or the Governor himself—to discuss how removing these provisions upholds transparency and strengthens Ohio's future.

Thank you,
[Your Name]

23. [Dustin Burton](#) – Executive Assistant to the Governor

Subject: Diverse Ohio Leaders Submit Veto Request – Invitation to Talk

Dear Mr. Burton,

Attached is a letter submitted to Governor DeWine by a diverse range of Ohioans—teachers, clergy, mental health professionals, civil rights advocates, and business leaders—asking for the removal of six non-fiscal provisions from the biennial budget.

These signers speak for thousands of Ohioans who are concerned that these policies were added without proper debate and threaten both civil rights and economic progress.

If it would be helpful, I'd be honored to meet or speak with you or others in the Governor's office to discuss how striking these items preserves democratic process and positions Ohio as a more welcoming and competitive state.

Best,
[Your Name]

24. [Colin Zorger](#) – Personal Aide to Governor DeWine

Subject: Urgent Veto Request from Diverse Coalition – Open to Meeting

Dear Mr. Zorger,

I'm reaching out to share the attached veto request letter submitted to Governor DeWine and signed by more than 50 leaders across Ohio—including pastors, teachers, therapists, nonprofit directors, legal experts, and more.

These signers represent thousands of voices from every corner of the state, unified in urging the Governor to line-item veto six provisions from the budget that are ideological in nature and not appropriate for fiscal legislation.

I'd be glad to speak with you, others in the Governor's office, or the Governor himself to explain how this request aligns with Ohio's long-term interests in fairness, growth, and strong policy-making.

Warmly,
[Your Name]

To [DeWine's Contact form](#):

"Dear Governor DeWine,

I am writing to respectfully urge you to use your line-item veto authority to remove six non-fiscal, discriminatory provisions that were added to Ohio's biennial budget. Copied below is a letter signed by more than 50 individuals from across the state- including educators, clergy, mental health professionals, attorneys, small business owners, and advocates- who together represent thousands of Ohioans. A PDF version of the letter has also been emailed to many of your staff members so as to maintain the formatting and graphics.

These provisions, which target the LGBTQ+ community, raise serious legal, economic, and moral concerns. They were inserted into the budget without public debate, bypassing the legislative process Ohioans count on to ensure transparency, accountability, and due consideration. That process matters—especially when civil rights, healthcare access, and community trust are at stake.

You have spoken before about your commitment to making Ohio a state that is welcoming to all. Taking a stand against these policy riders would uphold that commitment and send a powerful message that Ohio governs with fairness, integrity, and economic foresight.

If it would be helpful, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or members of your team to further discuss the concerns raised in this letter. We believe that thoughtful policy decisions—made through the proper channels—are essential to attracting and retaining the people, talent, and investment that make Ohio strong.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering this urgent request.

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

RE: Request to Line-Item Veto Discriminatory and Non-Fiscal Provisions in Ohio Budget

Dear Governor DeWine,

As individuals, organizations, and businesses committed to the health, economic vitality, and constitutional integrity of our state, we respectfully urge you to use your line-item veto authority

to remove six deeply concerning and non-budgetary provisions from the state's biennial budget. These provisions not only fall far outside the scope of fiscal governance but also introduce serious legal, financial, and reputational risks for the State of Ohio.

Specifically, we ask you to veto the following provisions:

Language asserting that "there are two sexes, male and female," which are "not changeable," echoing a controversial federal executive order. (see DOHCD 40, R.C. 9.05)

A ban on Medicaid funds for mental health services that "promote or affirm gender transition." (see MCD68, section 333.13)

Restrictions on state funding for youth shelters that affirm and support transgender youth. (see DOHCD14, section 291.20)

A mandate that materials related to sexual orientation or gender identity be hidden from minors in libraries. (see LIBCD5, R.C. 3375.47)

A prohibition on menstrual products in men's restrooms of public buildings. (see DASCD53, R.C. 9.561)

A restriction on the display of any flag besides the Ohio state flag on state property, including Pride flags. (see DASCD51, R.C. 123.30)

These provisions are not financial in nature. They are ideological directives that deserve to be publicly debated as standalone policy proposals, not quietly embedded in a must-pass budget bill. By bypassing the normal legislative process, these items undermine democratic due process and transparency. The people of Ohio—regardless of political affiliation—deserve the opportunity to weigh in on policies that affect civil liberties, healthcare access, and community services.

In addition to concerns over fairness and legality, these measures carry substantial economic consequences. If enacted, they are likely to prompt immediate legal challenges based on constitutional rights, anti-discrimination laws, and federal Medicaid requirements. Defending the state in court will cost taxpayers millions of dollars—resources that could be better spent addressing real budgetary priorities such as education, public safety, and infrastructure. Moreover, these provisions signal to workers, employers, and investors that Ohio is a hostile place for LGBTQ+ individuals and the organizations that support them. This has tangible consequences: businesses are less likely to invest, talented workers are leaving the state, and healthcare providers may hesitate to offer comprehensive services in an increasingly restricted landscape. These are not just cultural impacts—they are economic liabilities.

Ohioans deserve a budget that reflects sound financial stewardship and responsible governance, not one weighed down by divisive and discriminatory riders. We urge you to protect Ohio's fiscal health, constitutional integrity, and national reputation by line-item vetoing these unrelated provisions.

Respectfully,

Dr. Lis Regula, Advocacy Associate at Men Having Babies

Liz Schmidt, Leadership at Ohio Equal Rights

Ian Neinast, Leadership at Ohio Equal Rights

Joshua Petty-Keyes, Leadership at Ohio Equal Rights

Stephanie L. Ash, MSW, LSW, Esq.

Grayson Schultz, Founder of Chronic Sex

Rev. Dr. Joelle Henneman, Senior Pastor at Church and Community Development for All People

Liam Strausbaugh, Practice Associate at National Association of Social Workers - Ohio Chapter

Amelia Elise Green, Ohio Rally Leader at Trans Unity Coalition

Dara Adkison, Executive Director of TransOhio

Sara McSwords, Pastor at Beloved UMC

Anna Goure

Katelin Hansen, Deaconess and CFO at UM Church for All People

David Meredith, Chair of the Board at Reconciling Ministries Network United Methodist

James Waugh, Retired Ordained Elder at West OH Conference United Methodist Church

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Shannon Pitorak

Anastasia Martinez, Director of Policy and Campaigns at Ohio Womens Alliance

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Amanda Cole, Executive Director of Plexus LGBT & Allied Chamber of Commerce

Spencer Matthews, President of UTrans

Kathy Young, long-time member and small group leader at Bethel IUMC

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Khris Goins, Founder of Black Trans Men of Ohio

Geraldine Hartman, Outreach Committee Chair at Mayday Coalition Project

Dresden Thornweaver

Chester Dickerson, CEO of Chester Dickerson, DOM, LAc, ADS, CFMP

Kristen Santel, Owner of Santel & Kerr, LLC

Malia Lewis, Board of Education President of Cleveland Heights-University Heights City Schools

Makiedah Messam, Executive Director of Advocates for Basic Legal Equality, Inc.

Kimberly Morales, Trauma Therapist at Kimberly Morales, LISWS, LLC

Deborah Cannon, Owner at Deb Cannon Counseling, LLC

Jennifer McNally, Owner

Elizabeth Wagoner

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mZoBChqX4A2ODePqjW4kTDCqppPpZFYJZDT_D6tRtDQ/edit?tab=t.0”

LT. Gov. Jim Tressel:

Dear Lieutenant Governor Tressel,

I am writing to respectfully ask for your support in urging Governor DeWine to use his line-item veto authority to remove six non-fiscal, discriminatory provisions included in Ohio’s biennial budget.

Below, you’ll find the text of a letter signed by more than 50 individuals from across Ohio—including educators, clergy, mental health professionals, attorneys, small business owners, and advocates—who together represent thousands of constituents concerned about the direction these provisions take our state. A formatted PDF of the letter has also been shared with members of the Governor’s staff for reference.

These provisions, which disproportionately impact LGBTQ+ Ohioans, raise profound legal, moral, and economic concerns. They were inserted into the budget without public input, circumventing the legislative process that ensures transparency and fair debate. When civil rights and access to services are involved, the process is not a technicality—it’s a safeguard.

You have long championed the values of leadership, inclusion, and doing what is right even when it is not easy. Supporting the removal of these provisions would demonstrate a commitment to building a state where all Ohioans are treated with dignity and where good policy helps grow opportunity and prosperity for everyone.

If you or your office would be open to it, I would welcome the opportunity to meet or speak further about the concerns expressed in this letter. We believe Ohio’s long-term economic and civic health depends on upholding principled, transparent governance.

Thank you for your consideration and service to the people of Ohio.

Sincerely,