

Thursday, February 4, 2021

Dear Senator Rob Portman:

We urge you to support a coronavirus relief package based on President Biden's American Rescue Plan to help struggling families, communities, schools, and local businesses as soon as possible.

Ohio and our country are suffering from one of the worst health and economic catastrophes ever. There have been nearly 450,000 deaths, and millions of Americans have lost their jobs or are under-employed due to the pandemic. In Ohio, there have been more than 900,000 COVID cases and more than 11,000 resulting deaths. The U.S. economy lost more than 22 million jobs at the pandemic's height last year, including 650,000 in Ohio. One in seven adults says their households don't have enough to eat. There is also an escalating housing crisis, and many people are struggling to pay rent or their mortgage. Women and people of color continue to bear the brunt of the health and economic crises.

We must act quickly and boldly to get our country and Ohio back on track. We are urging your support of President Biden's \$1.9 trillion plan as a starting point for Congress to put together a robust economic recovery package. The plan includes \$600 billion to support public services, including \$350 billion in flexible aid to state and local governments, education funding, public transit funding, increased unemployment benefits, raising the minimum wage, direct cash payments, and eradicating the virus by providing funding for testing, contact tracing, vaccine distribution, and PPE. Frontline workers like nurses, teachers, EMS, child care providers, and others continued working throughout the pandemic to keep communities safe and healthy. Flexible, direct aid is now needed to avoid deep cuts in vital public services.

Now is not the time to withhold or restrict needed spending. Substantial investment is urgently needed to help Americans who are suffering and to stimulate our economic recovery. Robust, unrestricted aid is critical to quickly distributing the vaccine, preventing our children from falling behind, reopening shuttered businesses, and eliminating cuts to essential public services that will prolong the health and economic crisis.

Please support this budget resolution with reconciliation instructions that will help get our country through this dire crisis.

Sincerely,

AFSCME - Council 8
Ohio Civil Service Employees Association
OAPSE/AFSCME
Ohio AFL-CIO
Ohio Education Association
SEIU District 1199
Ohio Federation of Teachers
Communications Workers of America District 4
For Our Future Ohio Action Fund
Ohio Women's Alliance
Innovation Ohio
PL+US: Paid Leave for the United States
Ohio Organizing Collaborative