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The Monthly Newsletter of COHHIO, the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio



COHHIO's YEP and OhioVOTES youth join the rally in support of the "Raise the Wage" campaign

Raise the Minimum Wage! COHHIO Youth Make Television Interview

On Tuesday August 7, coalition partners of the minimum wage campaign held a rally to submit the required petitions to the Ohio Secretary of State's office. This was the last step before the initiative can be placed on the November ballot.

Joining the rally's more than 100 participants, 35 members of

COHHIO's YEP and OhioVOTES youth showed their support by starting the chant "Ohio Needs a Raise!"

Local and state media covered the rally. Columbus' Channel 10TV interviewed YEP's Becka and Sasha which was aired on their evening newscasts! For more info on the campaign, visit www.raisethe wage.org

COHHIO Report Still Making Headlines

Last year during legislative debate on HB 3, COHHIO and the League of Women Voters headed a public policy study on voter fraud to debunk the myth that "massive voter fraud" was taking place and immediate action was needed. The study found that out of more than nine million votes cast in 2002 and 2004, only four ballots were fraudulent.

The study proved that HB 3 was a law seeped in election fraud folklore – not fact, and was successful in stalling a fast track plan. Sub HB 3 eventually

passed, but with lesser ID requirements than had been previously planned.

The report is surfacing again; this time on the national media scene. Our report has become legendary in the election reform community, having been referenced by Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) on the senate floor; by The New York Times, CNN, National Public Radio, The Rachel Maddow Show and The Ed Shultz Show; and in declaration testimony for a federal lawsuit. COHHIO is pleased that the report is being used for sound public policy debate.



Jocelyn L. Travis
 Director
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Calendar at a glimpse

Oct 3: Absentee Voting Begins (You do not have to state a reason but must provide ID)

Oct 10: Voter Registration Ends for General Election

Nov 7: General Election Day (Polls open 6:30am to 7:30pm)



OhioVOTES Urges You To Prepare for November 2006 Election NOW!

There are many ways to become involved in the November 7 election. Let the OhioVOTES website (www.ohvotes.org) be your first step to making a big difference in your community. Start meeting candidates and learning about the issues on the November ballot right now. Educate others by planning candidate and issue forums for your agency or organization. The OhioVOTES website provides informative materials to help you hold dialogues and discussions on how to get more people involved in the voting process.

Spread the word: Due to new ID requirements, voters must be registered *at their current address* in order to vote a regular ballot. Log on to the OhioVOTES website to download voter registration forms. The site also has links to boards of elections offices that provide contact information.

Did you know? Voting Absentee

Absentee ballot applications can be submitted to your county board of elections right now. Thanks to HB 234, anyone is allowed to vote absentee without stating a reason. An absentee form may be downloaded from www.Ohvotes.org. Make it a point to distribute these applications to senior citizens, disabled individuals, college students, military personnel, and anyone who may be out of town on election day or would just prefer to vote from home. The absentee ballots will be mailed out 35 days before the election and can be requested until the Saturday before the election.

Here's what People are Saying about OhioVOTES Training Sessions!

"Very informative and helpful! Presenter was energetic and enthusiastic! She was also obviously knowledgeable."

"As a community we must rally together to help our clients become politically involved."

"Interesting . . . The poor and homeless in our community NEED to be heard. Thanks!"

"Very informative and well presented! Jocelyn is a great cheerleader for this important training session."

Register today for one of the September "Train-the-Trainer" sessions. Times TBA. Call Jocelyn Travis to reserve your space, (614)280-1984 (X23)

**September 6 in Columbus; September 9 in Cleveland;
September 14 in Cincinnati**

OhioVOTES is a nonpartisan project initiated by COHHIO, which is dedicated to expanding the role of Ohio's 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in voting and elections. If you are interested in supporting OhioVOTES, please contact Director Jocelyn Travis at 614.280.1984 ext.23 or info@ohvotes.org

Notes of Faith

from COHHIO's Executive Director

First we were disappointed. Sweeping changes made to the voter registration and ID requirements in HB 3 were rooted in election fraud folklore, not fact, we argued.

We became concerned in late June when rules filed by the secretary of state did not include one that made it clear that a voter with a state issued ID with a **former** address could cast a regular ballot. Why should COHHIO care about all of this? Because low-income and homeless Ohioans move more frequently than other Ohioans.

So we began checking to see how many voters in Ohio this might affect. A study conducted by Cleveland State University revealed surprising numbers: anywhere from a half million to 1.2 million registered voters could be required to cast a provisional ballot (with a 1 in 5 chance of NOT being counted) if pollworkers were unclear of the rule.

We got downright worried in late July when we polled 27 of the state's 88 county boards of election to see if they knew what to do when a voter's address on their ID did not match the one in the pollbook. Only seven knew the right answer.

Fed up with the lack of a clear directive, COHHIO held a news conference on August 3rd calling on the secretary of state to issue one to county boards of election. We figured that if the chief elections officer wouldn't clarify the provision, we'd do it through the press.

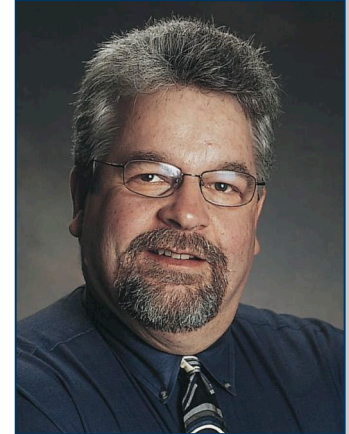
We did. Between *The Columbus Dispatch*, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *The Akron Beacon Journal*, the *Toledo Blade*, Ohio Public Radio and WBNS TV, we got the word out. Hopefully now the county election officials will clarify for their poll workers and the voters that those with a former address on their ID should vote a regular ballot.

Elsewhere on August 3rd, an unrelated yet pivotal federal level event occurred. The U.S. Senate voted down H.R. 5970, the bill that sought to blackmail supporters of a minimum wage increase into voting to gut the estate tax.

Senator Voinovich made the right decision when he voted against efforts by the Senate Republican leaders to pass an \$800 billion inheritance tax giveaway for the super wealthy by tying it to a proposed increase in the minimum wage.

Funding a minimum-wage hike by draining \$800 billion from public budgets used to fund health care, education and other critical programs wasn't a solution for low-income Americans. It would have created new, more serious problems.

We are grateful to the many who responded to our Action Alert with a call or e-mail to Senator Voinovich. Your communications helped kill a bad bill. Through a new partnership with USAction, a national group that campaigns to strengthen social, economic and health security for all Americans, COHHIO will continue to track and respond to federal issues that can have crippling effects on low-income Ohioans. It's good to know we can count on you for added support!



*Bill Faith,
Executive Director*

Bill Faith

*Youth are not tomorrow's
leaders...WE NEED THEM
TODAY!!*



YEP: Uniting Youth for Change



YEP Annual statewide meeting at OSU Yields Progress on Multiple Fronts

During the first weekend in August, 32 youths from eight Ohio cities came together to address multiple issues. The packed agenda included topics ranging from community organizing to voter engagement; from higher education to foster care; from youth housing to minimum wage to leadership. Here's a quick look at our activities:

- **Saturday simulation.** Youths practiced role-playing and problem solving to address a community problem as members of a mock community. Roles included community agency director, attorney, media representative, business owner, government official, and PTA member, among others.
- **Sunday, the real deal.** We spent time talking about real issues that youth face, including foster care, higher education, and youth housing. One group felt that some sort of higher education was very important to future job security, but lamented the fact that many low-income youths don't know how to apply for college or financial aid.
- **Monday fun in the sun.** We held our annual picnic at Franklin Park, hosting nearly 100 children and youths from local housing programs. Events included tours of the conservatory, a kick ball tournament, face painting, bracelet making, bubble stations,

sticker bags, lunch, ice cream, and t-shirts. This event was sponsored by YEP, Franklin Park and SRA/McGraw-Hill.

- **Tuesday rally at the statehouse.** YEP partnered with NAACP youths on the issues of voting and minimum wage. We attended a press conference and rally to turn in petitions to raise Ohio's minimum wage from \$5.15/hr. to \$6.85/hr. Both groups had participated in collecting signatures. Two YEP youths were featured in a story by the local CBS news affiliate. We also spent time creating a plan to get youth engaged in voting.

The weekend was a huge success and everyone looked forward to going back home and continuing their work to make a difference in their communities!

Good luck, Alexa!

YEP says farewell and thank you to dedicated YEP AmeriCorps VISTA member Alexa Allen of Daybreak Homeless Youth Program in Dayton. Alexa spent a good deal of time developing a youth advisory board; working on the program's databases and in the food pantry; and on youth housing issues facing 18 to 24-year-olds. Alexa is getting married and moving to Pennsylvania. We wish her all the best and know that you will be a success in all that you do!

New Analysis Indicates Federal Tax Cuts Benefit Richest Ohioans

A new analysis indicates that the one percent of Ohioans who earn the highest incomes in the state, averaging \$784,700 a year, will receive more in total from federal tax cuts between 2001 and 2010 than the bottom 60 percent of Ohio taxpayers. The analysis, conducted by a nonprofit, nonpartisan research group

called Citizens for Tax Justice, also reveals that the most affluent Ohioans will get bigger tax cuts as a share of their income than others further down the income scale. For more information, or to view the full report visit http://www.policymattersohio.org/fed_tax_cuts_2006_06.htm.

Harvard Studies America's Growing Housing Crisis

A newly-released Harvard study focuses on the growing affordable housing crisis in America. *The State if the Nation's Housing 2006*, conducted by the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, highlights several causes for the growing need for affordable housing,

including a large number of low-wage jobs, rising interest rates, and stricter developmental regulations with increased permitting costs and impact fees. To view the complete report, visit <http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/markets/son2006/son2006.pdf>.



Final Foreclosure Report

Policy Matters Ohio has released the most complete and accurate version of foreclosure statistics in the state. The final foreclosure report includes more

Ohio counties than previously reported. To access the report, visit <http://www.policymattersohio.org/>.

Investing in Workers: a Conference for Change

Looking for a new formula to boost Ohio's economy? COHHIO is a partner in *Investing in Workers: Strategies to Grow Ohio's Economy*, a conference dedicated to investing in Ohio's adult workers to stimulate economic success. The forum will take place October 9 and 10 in downtown Columbus at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The event will bring together business, government, philanthropic, economic development, education and training, and human services organizations and will discuss issues pertinent to the

gubernatorial election. Don't miss out! The deadline for registration is September 18, 2006. For more information, or to register, visit: <http://www.investinginworkers.org>.



Columbus Coalition Homelessness Forum

The Columbus Coalition for the Homeless is sponsoring its Sixth Annual Forum on Homelessness on Wednesday, October 18th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the YWCA Huntington Hall, 65 S. Fourth St. The topic of the Forum will be ***Economic Segregation, Educational Success, and Homelessness***. Participants will hear a presentation on economic segregation in Ohio's Public Schools from researchers at the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University, take part in segments of the YWCA Racism Dialogues, and prepare for grassroots organizing with help from B.R.E.A.D.'s lead organizer, John Aeschbury. Those who attend will also

engage in dialogue about the material presented in roundtable format with opportunities to ask questions.

Register on-line at www.columbushomeless.org

Contact the Coalition with any questions, (614) 252-3257.



National Homelessness Alliance Releases Policy Guide

Unsure of the details regarding federal programs and policies surrounding homelessness and housing issues? The National Alliance to End Homelessness recently published an 80-page policy guide with answers to frequently asked questions. The guide offers information on the federal appropriations process, pending legislation and additional advocacy opportunities. Among the recommendations for advocates, the

guide emphasizes the need to meet with senators and representatives, update organization members, develop strong database systems, and facilitate media coverage to raise community awareness about homelessness issues. For further clarification on federal programs and policies, the guide can be viewed in full at:

http://www.endhomelessness.org/pol/2006_policy_book.pdf.

VAWA Sets New Regulations for Public Housing Agencies

According to a recently released notice, Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) are prohibited to evict or deny assistance to female victims of domestic violence living in Section 8 properties, according to a new law. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act 2005 set these measures according to the definition of domestic violence in Section 3 of the United States Housing act of 1937, including dating violence, sexual assault or stalking. All PHAs should make tenants participating in the

Section 8 voucher programs as well as participating owners, aware of the VAWA requirements, as soon as possible. VAWA, signed into law on January 5, 2006, by President Bush, also requires PHAs to construct five-year and annual plans containing goals, activities, objectives, policies or programs designed to support or assist victims of domestic violence. HUD is currently developing proposed regulations to provide guidance for the PHAs enactment of VAWA requirements.



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Good Luck, Amanda...



It's a mystery how we were able to hold on to her for so long, this perky dynamo with talent and charm. Alas, it's time for Amanda Williams, the OSU senior in communications and intern extraordinaire to move on to the myriad opportunities that await her. We were lucky enough to have Amanda as a communications/development intern for 10 months. Whether it was newsletter or proposal writing, press conference coordination, *Housing Ohio* Conference trouble-shooting, or even data entry, Amanda completed the task with a smile and panache. Everyone at COHHIO will miss her, especially during lunchtime conversation!

Eliminating "Ghetto Tax:" A New Way to Beat Homelessness

On average, poor urban residents tend to pay more than residents from middle-class neighborhoods, according to a study released by the Brookings Institution in July. Consumer ignorance, predatory financial practices and the cost of doing business in poor areas are cited as possible causes for the "ghetto tax" phenomenon. The study of 12 major metropolitan cities, predicts that lowering the cost of low-income living by just one percent could yield \$6.5 million in new spending power for these families. For a full look at the study, visit http://www.brookings.edu/metro/pubs/20060718_PovOp.htm.

A Good Story from A. Goodman

Whether you were inspired by his story-telling presentation at COHHIO's April conference, or left curious after reading his outstanding reviews from attendees, your organization can learn from this communications professional in a new online workshop available at <http://www.agoodmanonline.com/purple.html>. The first semester of "Storytelling iSchool" will begin on September 7. In four, one-hour sessions, you can learn how to tell stories effectively, helping your nonprofit organization to attract donors, board members and staff who will help fight for your cause. Registration for the September session is August 30, 2006. For more information about visit <http://www.agoodmanonline.com/ischool/index.html>.

Housing Grant Application Deadline Approaching

The application deadline for the FY 2006 Housing Assistance Grant Program is September 6, 2006, by 5 p.m. The Office of Housing and Community Partnerships expects to distribute approximately \$4.5 million of the Ohio Housing Trust Fund dollars in grants to qualifying nonprofits. Organizations can apply for competitive funding in the in the areas of emergency home repair, handicapped accessibility modifications, down-payment assistance and homebuyer counseling activities. The application and further information is available at <http://www.odod.state.oh.us/webforms/>.

About Our Organization...

COHHIO is a statewide advocacy group and service providers network dedicated to ending homelessness while ensuring that Ohioans have decent, safe, fair, affordable housing, especially those with low-income and special needs.