

June 28, 2019

State Budget Extension?

By law, the state budget must be in place by July 1, the start of the new fiscal year. Generally, the Ohio Legislature and Executive Branch have been able to accomplish this. This year may be the exception. The Ohio House and Senate have put into place a plan to extend current state funding past July 1 in case a deal is not consummated in time for both chambers to pass the bill and for the Governor to sign it. We will keep you posted on what happens.

Meanwhile, a reminder that we had great news in the Senate on House Bill 166, the state budget bill: the Senate Finance Committee included a request by the state's food banks to add \$5 million per year (\$10 million total over the biennium) to the line item funding hunger relief efforts; this will provide \$24.5 million per year. We appreciate this recognition of the need to support anti-hunger efforts. However, if the budget bill continues to linger, it increases opportunity for all funding lines to come under heightened scrutiny, including the additional food bank funding. So, a call to action: please contact your State Senator and Representative and urge them to ensure the funding level as passed by the Senate is maintained for Ohio's food banks. For Ohio Legislative contact information, go to <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/>.

U.S. Supreme Court Rules against Administration on Census Citizenship Question

Essentially the U.S. Supreme Court this week upheld a district court remand to the U.S. Department of Commerce for further explanation for including a citizenship question on the 2020 Census. The majority opinion notes, "[W]e cannot ignore the disconnect between the decision made and the explanation given. ... If judicial review is to be more than an empty ritual, it must demand something better than the explanation offered for the action taken in this case. ... We do not hold that the agency decision here was substantively invalid. But agencies must pursue their goals reasonably. Reasoned decision making under the Administrative Procedure Act calls for an explanation for agency action."

While many would like to see the question struck down on its own questionable merit, as many a sports coach has noted – "a win is a win." The decision comes from challenges to the proposed question asking if a person is a U.S. citizen. It was argued that the question was not for factual purpose but rather to suppress response in high immigrant communities. It has been estimated by the Census Bureau that households corresponding to 6.5 million people would not respond to the census if this question was asked. Since these tend to be urban, minority communities the thought is the suppression would most hurt Democrats, aiding Republicans in Congressional redistricting based off census results.

Ohio as a state in particular has a strong interest in an accurate count. It has been projected that an undercount of 2 percent or more of the state's population could ensure a loss of two Congressional seats. Many federally-funded programs are also based off Census data, such as Medicaid and housing programs, so the state would also lose millions upon millions of dollars to an undercount.

Mid-Ohio Foodbanks joins numerous other organizations and businesses in Ohio in calling for a fair, accurate 2020 Census count. For more information, visit <https://www.ohiocensus.org/>.

Advocacy Contacts

For questions or information, contact your advocacy team: Tim White, Advocacy Manager: (614) 317-9480 or twhite@midohiofoodbank.org; or, Marilyn Tomasi, Vice President, Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs (614) 317-9446 or mtomasi@midohiofoodbank.org. Access [advocacy resources and FAN e-blasts](#) here; or, for federal advocacy information, visit the [Feeding America](#) and the [Food Research and Action Center \(FRAC\)](#) advocacy sites.