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Targeting Impact through Public Policy

November 2007

Franklin County Senior Services Levy on November 6 Ballot

Five-Year Levy Supports Cost-effective Programs

The five-year levy to support senior services in Franklin County is up for renewal on the November 6 ballot, and has broad community support. The senior services levy, passed by voters in 2002, will expire at the end of 2007.

Over 40,000 Franklin County residents age 60 and older have disabilities and need help with routine daily tasks like bathing, cooking and cleaning. The levy funds programs through the Franklin County Senior Options, which helps seniors remain independent by helping them with daily tasks, such as Meals on Wheels, personal care, emergency response systems, adult day care, transportation to doctors' offices, and minor home repair. These services can often delay or prevent the need for nursing home placement.

These services have proven to be cost-effective and can help keep seniors in their homes and their communities. The average service cost for a Senior Options participant is about \$200 a month, compared to nursing homes average cost of over \$4,000 a month. A cost-effective approach to providing care for seniors will become more important as the number of seniors in Franklin County is projected to increase from 138,651 in 2000 to 230,000 in 2020, an increase of 65 percent, according to a recent study completed by the Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University.

While United Way does not fund these same programs, the agencies that administer these programs receive over \$1 million in funding for other programs they run.

The senior services levy is a 0.90 mill levy, which will cost the homeowner of a \$100,000 home \$27.56 a year, or about 7.5 cents a day. Valued at about \$25 million, the levy is a replacement 0.85 mills levy, with an additional 0.05 mills to keep up with inflation and to increase the number of clients served.

Election Day is November 6

Polling places are open Tuesday, November 6 from 6:30am to 7:30pm.

If you have not received an absentee ballot, you can vote during normal business hours before Election Day in Room 100 at the Franklin County Board of Elections, 280 E. Broad St., Columbus.

More information is available at the Board of Elections website at <http://vote.franklincountyohio.gov/boe/>

Endorsers of the levy include:

- * Alzheimer's Association
- * The Call and Post
- * Columbus Chamber of Commerce
- * Columbus City Council
- * The Columbus Dispatch
- * Columbus Federation of Settlements
- * Grove City Council
- * Jewish Family Services
- * Mayor Michael B. Coleman
- * Metropolitan Area Church Council
- * OhioHealth
- * ThisWeek Newspapers

UWCO SUPPORTS SENIOR SERVICES LEVY - VOTE FOR ISSUE 14

United Way Public Policy Committee Chair Greg Overmyer and CEO & President Janet E. Jackson informed the "Vote for Issue 14" coalition on October 14 that the United Way endorses the five-year levy in support of critical senior services in Franklin County.

In a letter to the Board of Trustees, Overmyer and Jackson wrote that the levy merits United Way support because it is consistent with the organization's vision of building a community where everyone has the aspirations, resources and opportunities to reach their potential. Additionally, the senior services levy is important to the United Way system: 13 United Way agencies receive over \$1 million in levy dollars.

TIPPS WITHIN

Franklin County Senior Services Levy

Legislative Updates

Faces for Impact: Rep. Tracy Heard

Vote on November 6

Informing the United Way of Central Ohio Community about public policies that affect them



Faces for Impact
Rep. Tracy Maxwell Heard
 Democrat - 26th House District
Downtown and Near East Columbus

Committees

- *Education
- *Criminal Justice
- *Agriculture and Natural Resources
- *Economic Development and Environment

What are your three primary areas of focus?

Management of sexual offender predators and community protection; Environment and alternative energy; and education

What is your greatest accomplishment as an elected official?

Surviving the budget process! Seriously, in approaching the development of legislation, I have been careful and intentional about bringing to the table and including those professionals who do the work as well as those impacted by the proposed legislation whenever and as often as possible. I am continuously surprised that those I reach out to generally say they have never been consulted. That should not be and I am proud to be part of that change.

What do you believe should be the top priority for Ohio?

Finding a way to fully and equitably fund education – through college, not just high school.

Of all the legislation you have sponsored, which do you feel has the greatest potential to affect change in Ohio?

My soon to be submitted legislation to make an Allen County program a state-wide program. It addresses the issue of sexual offenders from a long-term management perspective, and is based on restrictions and procedures that provide legitimate safety for the community. It moves from emotional knee-jerk legislation to proven methods that actually work.

What is the greatest challenge facing the state of Ohio today?

An inadequate, insufficiently funded, inequitable and antiquated education system. Every aspect of our state from economic development, safety, health, to any segment of society you can name succeeds or fails based on the quality of education we provide in this state.

What message would you like to share with United Way agencies?

I would encourage you to look at and analyze issues and problems from a holistic perspective. We have been dividing and compartmentalizing our responses to issues for so long we have created silos that are wasteful, inefficient, disconnected and frustrating for the person in need of service. We have to start looking at all elements of a situation and though all may not be resolved by the same department or agency, they should all be working in conjunction to provide the best service to our citizens in the most expeditious, convenient and compassionate manner possible.

Visit United Way's Updated Public Policy Website

Now three years old, the United Way public policy website has a new look. Check it out.

www.uwcentralohio.org/publicpolicy

STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

**Early care and education
 Vacant and abandoned property**

Early care and education

As reported in the September TIPP, two companion home child care licensure bills were recently introduced. Sen. Steve Stivers (R - Columbus) introduced SB 232, which had a hearing on October 24 in the Senate Health, Human Services and Aging Committee. Rep. Jon Peterson (R - Delaware) introduced HB 342, which had a hearing on October 31 in the House Health Committee. Hearings on both bills are scheduled for early November.

The identical bills will require home child care providers caring for between three and six children to pass criminal background checks and submit to health, safety, and home inspections. Each bill allows for exclusions, including au pairs, baby-sitting done in the children's own homes, providers who are not paid, those under 18, and those who care for children from one family.

Vacant and abandoned property

Remedies to the foreclosure crisis and the related vacant property dilemma in Ohio continue to be developed. Below are two pieces of legislation of particular interest to United Way of Central Ohio.

HB 138 - Require recordation of deeds after a sheriff sale

Voted out of committee in June with only a single vote against it, this bill has been identified as an "easy win" for addressing some of the challenges related to landlords, typically absentee landlords, who do not file the correct ownership documents for properties that they then allow to fall into disrepair.

HB 359 - Enable the use of surplus tax delinquent monies to address nuisances linked to vacant property

This fast-moving bill was introduced on October 18 and had a hearing in the Ways and Means Committee on October 31. This bill will allow all counties to use surplus funds to help pay for a variety of activities, such as securing vacant properties, lot maintenance, and demolition. Cuyahoga County received this authority in the budget bill passed in July; this bill extends the authority to all counties.

**FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
 SCHIP**

Since the September TIPP, both chambers of Congress have again passed and President Bush has again promised to veto the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) legislation. While the bill passed both chambers, there were not enough votes to override a promised presidential veto. All of central Ohio's elected officials voted as they did in September: Reps. Hobson, Pryce and Tiberi and Sen. Brown voted for it; Sen. Voinovich voted against it.

According to some Capitol Hill watchers, there will not be any additional efforts to come to a compromise, instead leaving the legislation as a political tool for each party in next year's elections.