



# BREAKING GROUND

News from The Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio

Fall 2017

The Thanksgiving break will be a much-needed pause in the whirlwind of activity in Washington, where politicians have been working on legislation that could devastate our desperately needed affordable housing programs.

Last week I went to Washington to personally warn Ohio's Congressional delegation about the negative impact the tax bills could have on their most vulnerable constituents. Thanks to everyone who called our senators and representatives – Sen. Portman's aide told us they received 50,000 calls! Keep them coming – they are having an impact!

Whether you like it or not, federal tax incentives for private investors are the only reason there's any affordable housing still being produced and renovated in our country. **Simply put – messing with the federal tax code puts affordable housing at risk.**

While both the House and Senate tax bills would preserve the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, reducing the corporate tax rate will devalue the credits. Even more concerning, the House version would scrap private activity bonds, which are necessary to finance large multi-family affordable housing projects through the LIHTC program. To make matters worse, both bills eliminate historic tax credits, which are used to help fund preservation of affordable housing in Ohio.

All told, these bills are expected to reduce affordable housing production and preservation in Ohio by up to 81,000 rental units over the next decade, according to a recent [Novogradac & Co. analysis](#).



The House passed its version last week, and the Senate is hoping to pass its proposal in the first week of December in order to get a tax bill to President Trump by Christmas.

In the big picture, this legislation will primarily give a \$1.5 trillion tax cut to wealthy corporations and individuals, which will soon explode the federal deficit. That will then force big cuts to entitlements and domestic discretionary spending, like HUD's housing and homelessness programs.

We need to make sure the tax bill does no harm to our low-income housing tools, like LIHTC and historic tax credits because any new tax policies could be in effect for many years to come. But even if we succeed in protecting LIHTC and HTC, a \$1.5 trillion tax cut presents a huge threat to future funding for programs that provide decent affordable housing for the most vulnerable Ohioans.

Just to complicate things, federal budget negotiations are continuing in the background of the tax cut negotiations. While the House and Senate versions are big improvements over Trump's initial FY 2018 budget proposal, the current budget bill still needs an additional \$345 million just to prevent the loss of 40,000 Housing Choice vouchers.

So have a peaceful and restorative Thanksgiving holiday. **But next week please take action – call Sen. Portman's office (202-224-3353) and express your concern about the tax bill's impact to affordable housing programs and the federal deficit.**

Bill Faith, Executive Director

*For more information on what you can do to improve the tax bill, visit the [A.C.T.I.O.N. Campaign's website](#). The [Campaign for Housing and Community Development Funding](#) has more details on federal budget negotiations.*

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### Homeless Veterans Funding on the Line

Congressional tax and budget negotiations were at the top of the agenda on my recent trip to Washington, but I'm pleased to report progress on another important but little-known threat to efforts to fight veterans homelessness in Ohio and throughout the country.

On Sept. 22 the VA's Central Office recently issued [an internal memo](#) detailing how nearly \$1 billion in various programs would be immediately reallocated into a general purpose fund. That includes \$265 million in the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) program, which is key to the national effort to end veterans homelessness.

[Click here to read Bill's post](#) on the threat to continued funding for the VASH program.

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### Tenant Criminalization Legislation at the Statehouse

COHHIO is fighting a bill at the Statehouse that would increase criminal penalties on tenants who damage rental property and allow metropolitan housing authorities to ban anyone convicted from accessing public housing or Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) for three years.

House Bill 282 will likely be scheduled for opponent testimony before the House Financial

Institutions, Housing & Urban Development Committee on Tuesday, Nov. 28 at 9 a.m. We are asking organizations that are concerned about this bill to sign a letter expressing your opposition to members of the Ohio General Assembly. **If you haven't already signed, please add your organization's name to [this sign-on letter](#).**

[Click here for more information](#) on how HB 282 could negatively impact Ohio tenants.

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### **The 2018 PIT Count is Coming!**

Having reliable local data plays an important role in raising public awareness of the challenges with homelessness and in securing more resources from public and private sources to address the issue. One way this data is collected is through an annual count of individuals experiencing homelessness.

The annual Point-in-Time Counts (PIT) occur on one day during the last 10 days of January. The next PIT count in the 80 rural Ohio counties known as the Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoSCoC) will take place on Jan. 23, 2018. [Click here](#) to read more on preparations for the 2018 PIT Count.

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### **Welcome Gina Wilt and Dillon McCrea**

COHHIO is pleased to announce the hiring of Statehouse veteran [Gina Wilt](#) to lead the nonprofit organization's advocacy program after the retirement of long-time Advocacy Director Cathy Johnston. Gina joins COHHIO after managing lobbying efforts with CRN Consulting, Ltd. for the Home Matters to Ohio campaign to expand the Ohio Housing Trust Fund in the state budget.

COHHIO also welcomes [Dillon McCrea](#) to the team. Dillon, our new administrative assistant, has been supporting the advocacy team with solid research, communications, development and logistical help. [Click here to meet Gina and Dillon](#).

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### **In Other Developments...**

Several innovative affordable housing projects in Ohio caught our eye recently, including the Commons at Little Bark Creek in Freemont, Londonerry Apartments in London, and Commons at West Village in Cleveland. [Click here to learn more](#).

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## Upcoming Events

The Ohio Housing and Homelessness Collaborative is offering an upcoming webinar series on strategies to end homelessness in advance of the forthcoming publication of Ohio's first statewide plan to end homelessness. The three webinars scheduled for Nov. 30, Dec. 7 and Dec. 19 will be facilitated by Barbara Poppe, of Barbara Poppe and Associates, and Katie Kitchin, of the Corporation for Supportive Housing. [Click here to find out more.](#)

These and other upcoming training opportunities on [the COHHIO Calendar](#) include:

- Leveraging Partnerships in Healthcare to End Homelessness - Nov. 30
- Using Federal Benchmarks and Criteria to achieve a functional end to homelessness across all populations - Dec. 7
- Ohio Balance of State HMIS New User Training - Dec. 12
- Building partnerships with JFS agencies and employment centers to end homelessness - Dec. 19
- Best practices for Case Manager in the Crisis Response System Webinar - Date TBD
- Safe and Supported LGBTQ+ Cultural Competency training - Jan. 16 in Kent; Feb. 13 in Dayton - details TBD

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### COHHIO Workers' Comp Group Update

COHHIO offers members the opportunity to significantly reduce their workers' compensation costs by enrolling in our Group Rating programs. While the Group Rating enrollment deadline has passed, there's still time to enroll in Group Retrospective rating programs - the deadline is Jan. 24! [Click here to learn more.](#)

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### Thank You COHHIO Interns!

COHHIO has had great help this fall from several capable interns - thank you Patrick Woodruff, Stephen Crouch and Matthew Stunneck!

[Click here](#) to find out more about how Stephen, Matthew and Patrick have been supporting COHHIO's federal advocacy work and doing research into how the opiate crisis is impacting the homeless services system.

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## Christmas Shopping for COHHIO

You can support COHHIO's mission to end homelessness and expand affordable housing in Ohio while shopping online for your holiday presents! Shop at [smile.amazon.com/ch/31-1189029](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/31-1189029) and Amazon will donate a portion of the proceeds to COHHIO.

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*For more information about COHHIO, visit [our website](#) and check out our [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter feed](#). To support COHHIO's ongoing efforts to end homelessness in Ohio, [become a member](#) and get a discount on next year's conference!*

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Sent via [ActionNetwork.org](https://ActionNetwork.org). To update your email address, change your name or address, or to stop receiving emails from COHHIO Advocates, please [click here](#).