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News Release

While Ohio leaders debate where to cut funding in order to balance the state budget, it is important to remember that a large part of the budget deficit was caused by the state's income tax reductions. These tax cuts overwhelmingly benefited the wealthiest Ohioans more than any other group of state residents.

At the same time, the budget cuts that have already been made as a result of the tax cuts have hurt the state's poorest residents more than any other group. And now new budget cuts in areas such as education, health care and public services would likely have even worse consequences for most families in Ohio.

The tax cuts have predominantly helped the residents of Ohio's wealthy suburbs, but the previous budget cuts and the proposed new budget cuts will hurt people throughout the state, and especially in counties in Appalachian Ohio. The economies in these counties rely heavily on tax dollars, and further reductions in state government spending will hurt these counties disproportionately.

The past few years have shown that federal and state tax cuts have not inspired a new wave of investment in low-income communities. Instead, the cuts have hurt these communities and further increased the gap between the rich and the poor.

Athens County Job and Family Services recently compiled data on every county in Ohio, looking at areas such as the number of tax returns filed by people earning below \$60,000 per year and above \$200,000 per year. Those earning more than \$200,000 represent just 2% of all tax returns (or 132,000 returns) filed but this group receives \$105 billion in total income, which is nearly 33% of all income in Ohio. That is greater than the total earnings of 73% of Ohio taxpayers (or 3.9 million returns) who earn less than \$60,000 per year. The total earnings of this group is \$98 billion.

The data files also include information on areas such as median income, poverty, total state income taxes paid, total sales taxes paid, tax expenditures, Medicaid participation and other social programs for each county. The information shows which counties are more or less reliant on tax dollars for their economies, and we encourage you to look through the information to see how reliant your county is on tax dollars.

Ohio citizens, particularly our poorest residents, need assistance from government programs much more than the rich need the tax breaks we have given to them. It's time to look for ways to raise money to pay our bills to help all Ohio residents, not time to cut programs to the poor in order to benefit the rich.

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