



# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 06/25/2025**

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## **CCAO Thanks Ohio General Assembly for Investments in Children's Services and Policy Changes to Strengthen County Government**

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) thanks the Ohio General Assembly for its commitment to the state-county partnership through the passage of the state operating budget, House Bill 96. The version of HB 96 passed today provides targeted investments to counties to aid in addressing the child welfare placement crisis. Increased funding for children services placement costs, investment in the creation of regional child wellness campuses to offer crucial short-term stabilization placements for children in crisis, and cost transparency and predictability language for placement rates will provide much needed assistance to counties in caring for our most vulnerable population.

“Budgets are about priorities. The operating budget passed out of the Ohio General Assembly today prioritizes support to counties for public safety, child welfare placements both in terms of funding and cost transparency, and more,” CCAO President and Clermont County Commissioner David Painter said. “I am proud of our members’ efforts to advocate and find common ground with state leaders on key county priorities and we thank the legislature for strengthening the state-county partnership with the passage of HB 96.”

The Ohio General Assembly further provides support to county public safety services through increased funding for Next Generation 9-1-1. Additionally, the bill requires Medicaid to apply for a waiver for coverage for certain county inmate medical expenses, if approved, the waiver would increase access to care for inmates in recovery and reduce the county costs associated with that care. The final version of the budget also retained a crucial pilot program that allows for regionalization of indigent defense services through the state public defender, with the potential to be an expanded model in future biennia. The bill also increases funding for child care choice vouchers to allow more children and families to access publicly funded child care through the program.

Children services funding, child welfare placement cost transparency, regional child wellness campuses, increased indigent defense reimbursement, increased funding for 9-1-1, and increased capacity for child care were some of CCAO’s top budget priorities for this budget cycle. We are grateful for Governor DeWine’s leadership in addressing the child welfare placement crisis and child care capacity, and to all members of the Ohio General Assembly for their support of county government.

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CCAO supports effective county government through legislative advocacy, education and training, quality enterprise service programs and a greater understanding of county government. By partnering with county commissioners, executives and council members, CCAO and its members work toward a shared goal of improving and advancing Ohio’s 88 counties. Stronger counties build a stronger Ohio.