



PRESS STATEMENT

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Use ARP funds to build healthy and safe communities from the ground up

Lawmakers should give the public a chance to weigh in on spending federal funds

News reports indicate that Gov. Mike DeWine and Republican leaders of the Ohio legislature plan to direct \$250 million in American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding to law enforcement and other first responders. Policy Matters Ohio Executive Director Hannah Halbert released the following statement in response:

“Ohioans across the state know that safe communities are ones where all people, regardless of income or race, have what they need to live happy, healthy, and fulfilling lives. State policymakers can help build stronger communities by directing public funds to essential services like public schools, quality child care and health care, and by making sure all people are paid a living wage for their work.

“Instead, Gov. DeWine and his allies in the state legislature want to put federal rescue funds into the same old approaches to law enforcement that fail to create safer communities, and too often over-police and under-protect Black and brown Ohioans and those with low incomes.

“Gov. DeWine is playing politics with federal money instead of using it to build safer, healthier, and happier communities— which would be good both for first responders and the communities they serve. The governor’s statement stokes divisions between communities and police and is part of the same old divide-and-conquer approach to policymaking that makes all of us less safe.

“Federal rescue dollars should be used to help Ohioans recover and rebuild. Ohio’s essential workers, from home health aides to child care workers, should be among those receiving premium pay. Before legislators approve DeWine’s plan, they should give the people an opportunity to weigh in with full hearings and public input. It appears that instead, lawmakers will rush the bill through the General Assembly in much the same way they did with previous legislation spending more than \$1 billion — with one, 10-minute Senate committee hearing. This is not accountable government.

“Rather than falling back on divisive and damaging approaches to policing that pit Ohioans against each other, our state’s leaders should focus on building strong communities from the ground up.”

- [Read more](#) about how state policymakers can use ARP funds to build a healthier, more prosperous Ohio for everyone.
- [Four ways the American Rescue Plan](#) can support working people.