



**PRESS RELEASE
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Contact:
Rob Moore, rmoore@policymattersohio.org
Wendy Patton, wpatton@policymattersohio.org
614.221.4505

Home energy assistance, social service programs safe for now, but threats loom

Despite draconian cuts in his 2019 budget proposal, last week President Trump signed a 2018 spending bill that maintains funding for crucial programs that protect children and the elderly from abuse and make sure struggling families stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

Trump's [fiscal year 2019 federal budget proposal](#) would cut the \$1.7 billion Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) program by 83 percent and completely eliminate it in the next three years. SSBG provides flexible funding to states for services like child care assistance, child abuse prevention and community-based care for the elderly and people with disabilities. He'd also completely eliminate the [Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#) (LIHEAP), which provides assistance to people who can't afford heat and electric bills; and the [Weatherization Assistance Program](#) (WAP), which helps low-income households make their homes more energy efficient. In two briefs released today, Policy Matters Ohio shows how these programs keep hundreds of thousands of Ohioans safe.

Each year, Ohio receives about \$57 million in SSBG funds that help care for and protect nearly 500,000 people. If President Trump and Congress eliminate SSBG, Ohio would lose over three-quarters of its budget for child and adult protective services, draining funding from [programs](#) like child foster care, home-based care and case management services.

"In 2016, these programs helped almost 4,000 children in the foster care system, over 1,000 people in home care, and more than 30,000 people through case management," Policy Matters Researcher Rob Moore said. "If this grant is eliminated, Ohio lawmakers will either have to find new ways to fund these services or stop providing them."

Last year 487,620 Ohio households requested LIHEAP aid in paying their utility bills. The state received \$148 million in funding. Ohioans received \$33.3 million in WAP funding in 2016-2017. Congress boosted funding for this program by 10 percent in the recent spending bill.

"With its cold winters, hot summers and old housing stock, these programs are extremely important in Ohio," Policy Matters Senior Project Director Wendy Patton said. "President Trump signed a tax bill that gives hundreds of billions of dollars to the wealthy but wants to scrap programs that simply help people keep the lights on. We're grateful Congress did the right thing this year and we'll be sure to remind them to do the right thing next year as well."

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*Policy Matters Ohio is a nonprofit, nonpartisan state policy research institute
with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.*

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