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## **Community Action network advocates for ‘healthy tax policy’**

Advocates for the poor today called upon legislators to shift their focus from cutting essential programs to revising tax policies that have not benefited Ohio.

“Anytime there is a recession, the first suggestion to cure declining revenues is always cuts in programs for the poor,” said Philip Cole, executive director of the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies. “The essential role of government is to ensure that people’s basic needs are met: food, housing, education. A healthy tax policy fulfills that role by keeping safety-net programs intact.”

Cole called on legislators to take the bold step of repealing the 2005 package of tax reforms in order to maintain funding for food banks, health clinics, child care and other essential programs.

“Obviously, the policies of continual tax cuts have not made Ohio stronger or brought in new businesses,” Cole said. “But to date, no one has stepped up to stop the slide. Even a temporary halt of the tax changes would be a better course of action than continued trimming of critical services.”

Cole also disagreed with the Governor’s proposal for slot machines as a means of raising revenue. He called for a longer-term solution and for tax policies that secure Ohio’s revenue stream.

“Ohio should have a more predictable solution than slot machines, and that solution is a healthy tax policy,” Cole said. “We appreciate the Governor’s ideas, but we believe the better choice is for the General Assembly to consider a more realistic tax policy.”

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*Philip E. Cole has served as executive director of OACAA for 20 years. The Association represents the 52 Community Action Agencies in Ohio. Services provided by the agencies include Head Start, Home Weatherization Assistance, Home Energy Assistance, and a variety of other services based on local needs. For more information on Ohio’s Poverty Fighting Network visit [www.oaca.org](http://www.oaca.org).*