



OHIO ORGANIZING
COLLABORATIVE

Protect
Our Right
to Vote!

SPRING 2022 UPDATE:

BUILDING POWER

“Get in good trouble,
necessary trouble.”

- Rep. John Lewis



Friend,

It has been a busy couple months at the OOC! From Cleveland to Lima, Columbus to Akron, our grassroots leaders have been putting in the work to build a powerful multiracial democracy here in Ohio.

From our voter registration efforts launching statewide, our formerly incarcerated and child care leaders organizing for a more dignified life, and our students fighting to preserve an honest and accurate education - everyday Ohioans are making good trouble all over our state.

We're proud of these folks on the ground building a better life everyday for their communities. Organizing is hard work, but we know there is no substitute for a good one-to-one conversation that can help unlock someone's potential and unleash their power.

Even during these hard times, the power of regular people gives us hope everyday. When we join together across our differences, we know we can win.

We hope you enjoy learning more about our work this season. We appreciate your support, and look forward to showing you how our leaders are building a better future for all of us throughout the year.

Onward,

Prentiss Haney and Molly Shack

1 WE KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE

Ending Collateral Sanctions and Reforming Ohio's Criminal Legal System

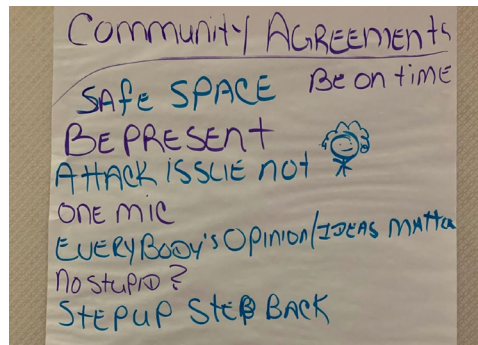
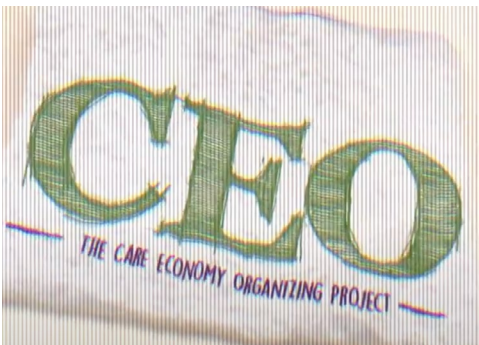
Our Building Freedom Ohio leaders are working hard to promote real community safety. In May, more than 100 Ohioans directly impacted by incarceration lobbied our legislators to end the death penalty, reform the bail system in Ohio, and eliminate the pain of collateral sanctions on their families. Legal barriers to employment, housing, and driving (among many others) can severely restrict peoples' efforts to reintegrate after incarceration and force them back into recidivism. BFO's two-day assembly and training served as an important foundation for an issue campaign on collateral sanctions that BFO is planning to roll out in the coming years.



At Lobby Day, our formerly incarcerated leaders shared powerful stories with our legislators about how collateral sanctions hurt our families. Notably, Ohio Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted committed his support to improve workforce development for formerly incarcerated Ohioans and remain in conversation with our leaders regarding the removal of collateral sanctions. Senator Cecil Thomas (D-Cincinnati), an advocate for criminal justice reform, also spoke about the importance of voting for returning citizens. We are building power to hold our lawmakers accountable in making sure everyone can live fully dignified lives - no exceptions.

2 WE FUND OUR CARE

Funding Ohio's Child Care Workers and Protecting Our Moms



As our country continues to recover from the pandemic, with growing worries of inflation and a possible recession around the corner, our care workers continue to suffer the worst effects. The people tasked with the labor of caring for our children are the least cared for in our country.

In early May, 20 of our child care providers and parents met with key legislators in Columbus to protect the Step Up to Quality rating system. The group demanded that childcare providers be paid fairly and quality child care be accessible and affordable for all Ohio's families – no matter their income, race or zip code. They met with the commission members appointed to review the Step Up to Quality childcare program in Ohio. In addition, our leaders shared their stories about the need to make doula services available to all mothers regardless of skin color or income – the following day, [HB 142](#) moved out of committee and now awaits a vote on the House floor!

In mid-May, Black-owned child care centers in Cincinnati shut down their services as part of the national Day Without Childcare on May 9th. Cincinnati council member Greg Landsman came out to one of the centers in support of the cause. Councilman Landsman is supporting our efforts to pass an ordinance that will locally fund childcare in Cincinnati after the loss of federal stimulus funds. Over 500 Ohioans pledged their support of this effort to raise awareness of child care funding in Ohio and nationally.

Thanks to our advocacy, both Franklin and Hamilton Counties have committed millions in local funding to support child care workers! In Franklin County, local officials have set aside over \$20 million to help families afford child care, providers to reach or maintain quality care standards, and early childhood educators to be able to afford housing, among other items. We are proud of the work we've done so far to put child care at the forefront of the political discussion in Ohio.

WE FIGHT FOR AN AFFORDABLE & HONEST EDUCATION



RALLY TO PROTECT HONESTY IN OHIO EDUCATION!

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9TH AT 12PM
IN FRONT OF BUCHEL STATUE

Join the University of Akron OSA chapter in speaking out against House Bill 327, which censors honest education and training about our history, racism, sexism, gender, and LGBTQ+ identity in K-12 schools, state higher ed campuses, and more.



Canceling Student Debt and Pushing Back Against The Anti-CRT Movement

Ohio Student Association (OSA) is a national leader in the fight against student loan debt. In early April, OSA member-leaders helped organize a national mobilization in Washington, D.C. pushing President Joe Biden to cancel over \$1 trillion in education debt. Shortly after the national mobilization, President Biden announced another extension of the student loan pause through August. OSA's work on student debt has been covered in [USA Today](#), [Cleveland.com](#), and others.

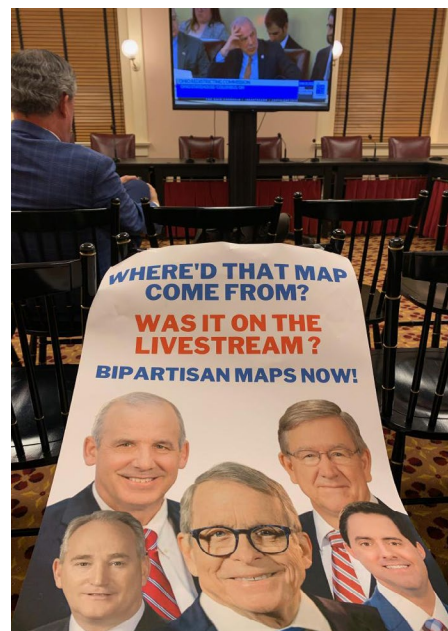
Statewide, OSA is also on the frontlines of fighting for an honest and accurate education in our classrooms. With two anti-CRT bills underway in the legislature, our student leaders have been raising awareness about the need for Ohioans to learn a full and diverse history that can better inform our future. In early March, Akron area students organized rallies at two local universities to fight back against these bills, resulting in a flurry of local coverage that prominently spotlighted OSA leaders and the teachers supporting them.



Fighting for Fair Legislative and Congressional Maps

The OOC is also leading the fight for fair maps here in Ohio. For the last five times, the Ohio Supreme Court has struck down the gerrymandered legislative maps that the supermajority party has tried to ram through the official redistricting process. Over the last few months, we have been part of a coordinated legal effort statewide to sue the Ohio Redistricting Commission for failing to do their jobs and pass fair legislative maps. With each objection we've filed, the state Supreme Court has ruled in our favor every single time.

Equal Districts Rally



In order to re-energize and mobilize Ohio voters leading up to the midterms, the OOC has also partnered with OSA to raise awareness of the need for fair maps. This summer, we have brought on 13 new Democracy Fellows from all over Ohio – young Ohioans who are committed to the fight for our democracy. These fellows will learn about the importance of redistricting and how to use organizing and narrative strategies in order to win the fight for fair maps. We are excited about their potential and look forward to seeing what they will unleash in the fight!

OSA FELLOWS



5 WE ACTIVATE OHIO'S MULTIRACIAL VOTERS

As we enter into a crucial midterm season, we have officially kicked off our statewide voter registration program! We are working to beat the discriminatory voter purge and engage low-to-no propensity voters in Ohio, particularly young voters and Black voters. Since 2012, the OOC has registered nearly 400,000 voters. We plan to register at least 40,000 voters in Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati this year.



6 WE PUT OUR FAITH INTO ACTION

Protecting Our Vote and Empowering Our Clergy Leaders

People of faith in Ohio are building power to protect our vote, build safer communities and secure economic dignity for our families. Dozens of Black Ohio clergy joined a national mobilization in Washington, D.C. and met with Senator Sherrod Brown to push for the protection of voting rights. Faith leaders in Columbus rallied for fair maps, prayed for peace at the Ohio Black Expo, and launched dozens of justice teams in congregations across Ohio. The Amos Project also held leadership trainings in Columbus and Cincinnati, developing faith leaders to organize, share stories, and build power in their congregations and in their neighborhoods.



7 WE HONOR EACH OTHER'S DIGNITY

Destigmatizing Opioid Addiction in Rural Ohio

In Lima, the OOC also piloted an experimental mini-grant program called “Get Lifted,” which uses the power of art to heal and destigmatize those living with addiction. Through the program, Lima author and poet Ashley Cook was able to publish her first book about her recovery journey.

When we join together, we know we can make Ohio a place where we have the support we need to recover from illness and shape our lives into what they can be. Check out more about [Get Lifted here](#).

[View Lima Summit Interview](#)

HOMETOWN STATIONS | abc FOX NBC CBS

NEWS COVID-19 WEATHER SPORTS COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING LOCAL JOBS CONTESTS STATION INFO MARKETPLACE VOTETOWN WATCH LIVE WIN AND TAKEAWAY ICE CREAM TOUR

Artists in Lima helping break the stigma and decriminalize drug addiction

Todd Cummins Apr 23, 2022 Updated Apr 24, 2022

YOUR NEWS NOW 11:04 69

MOST POPULAR

ARTICLES IMAGES VIDEOS

- Wapakoneta Police Department shooting at downtown gas station
- "Hypnotic" Friday police employ line and buses with MidRange
- Car hit by train after getting out of County
- Bear Pit Playground becoming a landfill
- Stone Buckle resigns as Ohio's...

The Ohio Organizing Collaborator is trying to shift the public perception of drug users in Lima through the arts. Their initiative is "LIFT-UP" and it has a mini-grant program for people to use creative outlets like painting and writing to help remove the stigma and humanize people that are battling their addiction. Recently they gave grants to the Voices of Prosperity for their "Expression of Recovery" painting project.



8 WE GROW OUR TEAM



Our team keeps growing! This April and May, we welcomed 11 new people to the OOC.

Damian Calvert will organize formerly incarcerated folks for Building Freedom Ohio. Melodie Agnew and Katelyn Jackson will organize parents for the All In For Ohio Kids coalition.

For The CEO Project, Ashley Zarzabal will organize child care workers online as our digital organizer. Trina Averette and Tarrezz Thompson will support this work as our child care fellows. Cincinnati pastor Lesley Jones joins the AMOS Project as strategic advisor, and Jacqueline Moore is the new AMOS fellow out of Dayton.

On the strategic capacities front, Joel Williams will lead our civic engagement efforts as Field Director. Afi Ntontolo is our new Digital Communications Coordinator, and Kandiss Bondurant is our HR Manager. Welcome!

9 WE CHANGE THE NARRATIVE

Press Highlights:

- **Nonprofit Quarterly:** [Beyond Neoliberal Politics: What a Multiracial US Democracy Requires](#)
- **Columbus Dispatch: Plaintiff:** [Just like Jim Crow, commission ‘robbing’ Black Ohioans of ‘political power’](#)
- **Prism:** [How independent map-drawing commissions are transforming redistricting](#)
- **USA Today:** [Biden hasn’t forgiven student loan debt. Advocates warn it could hurt Dems in elections.](#)
- **Akron Beacon Journal:** [Kent, UA student protestors: ‘Divisive concepts’ bill designed to comfort white people](#)
- **Spectrum News:** [Advocates call on lawmakers to pass criminal justice reform](#)
- **The Atlantic:** [Republicans Are Trying to Suppress More Than Votes](#)
- **Akron Beacon Journal:** [Cynicism toward courts might lessen if more people of color were serving as justices](#)
- **Ideastream / The Marshall Project:** [Who’s electing judges in the Cleveland area? Not those ensnared in the system](#)
- **Afropunk:** [“HB 616, Ohio’s “Don’t Say Gay” Bill](#)
- **NY Times:** [Who’s to Blame for Sneaky Partisan Line-Drawing?](#)