



With COHHIO's Facebook and Twitter, it's not just about COHHIO, it's about issues that affect YOU and the people you serve. Join our growing family of passionate social media advocates! Please Like and follow us today.

## COHHIO Mission

COHHIO is a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to ending homelessness and to promoting decent, safe, fair, affordable housing for all, with a focus on assisting people with low income and special needs.

Visit [www.cohhio.org](http://www.cohhio.org).

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COHHIO  
Staff List



News from COHHIO, the  
Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio



**Election Updates**



**Notes of Faith**



**SSI Ohio News  
and Story**



**YEP News**



**2011 NAEH  
Conference Overview**



**COHHIO Members  
Save BIG!**



**Give to COHHIO  
through your workplace  
giving program**



**A faith-based perspective  
on Issue 2**

## Election 2011 – What's in Store?

The results of Election 2011, originally a routine, off-year election, will have a lasting impact on the state of Ohio. Driven by ballot issues of importance to voters, this election has morphed into one that could have the kind of turnout usually associated with presidential election years.

A complicating factor in Election 2011 will be whether or not HB 194 – legislation that was signed into law and involves significant changes in the voting process – is in effect for the November election. Possible election changes include shortening the absentee early-voting period to 21 days from 35; and restricting hours for in-person early voting, with

no balloting on Sunday.

It is not yet clear whether opponents of the new law will be successful in their petition drive to challenge HB 194 at the polls through referendum. The outcome may not be known until October 20.

The combination of high turnout for important ballot issues and voting rule uncertainty will make this year's election tumultuous.

OhioVOTES will keep you informed of the things you – and the people you serve – can do to make sure your vote counts! Sign up with [cathyjohnston@cohhio.org](mailto:cathyjohnston@cohhio.org) to get weekly voting tips. Here's one now:



### Now is the time to Check & Change Your voter registration...

**Check** your voter registration to make sure you are registered.

[Click here](#) to check

**The deadline for voter registration is October 11.**

**Check** to make sure your name and address are current. **Change** your name if it's different from the last time you voted. **Change** your address if you moved since the last time you voted.

The form for changing name and address is the same as the voter registration form.

Get the [form here](#). You can mail or hand-deliver the form; see locations in the previous link. Ohio does not have online voter registration. Remember to complete the form and mail or deliver it!

**Election Day is November 8, 2011**

## Notes of Faith

from COHHIO's Executive Director

Lawmakers will soon return to Washington to chart a pathway through our nation's precarious economic landscape. This will not be an easy exercise, and the painful bickering that permeated the debt ceiling negotiations earlier this summer will likely resume.

But one issue lawmakers will return to should have no debate: We should be safe to secure our financial futures and those of our children. Like our nation's schools, streets and airways, our financial landscape must remain free of predators and bandits.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) was established last year to protect consumer interests in the financial services industry – critically important because it was the failure of the current bank regulators to stop predatory mortgage lending and other reckless Wall Street practices that helped bring on the 2008 mortgage meltdown and with it, the current recession.

The CFPB was designed to prevent such financial nightmares from recurring. The problem is that while it's currently supervising big banks and credit companies – powers it assumed July 21 – the CFPB will not gain adequate oversight over payday lenders, mortgage companies, and other “non-banks” until a director with full authority is confirmed.

President Obama nominated former Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray for the post in July. Senate confirmation hearings on Mr. Cordray are set to begin September 6.

Cordray is an exceptional choice to lead the new agency. He's had broad experience as a lawmaker, county and state treasurer, and attorney general. He's seen first-hand the devastation that reckless mortgage lending and 15 years of record foreclosures caused in Ohio, and he's worked every strategy available to help prevent unnecessary foreclosures.

Richard Cordray is the right choice because he wants a vibrant financial services arena that provides enough information and protection to support good decision-making on the part of consumers.

As Ohio's attorney general, Cordray embraced companies big and small that marketed legitimate financial services and products. But he aggressively pursued those that perpetuated unconscionable, unfair or deceptive acts against consumers. In the last two years, he recovered over \$2 billion dollars from Wall Street to repay Ohio's wrongly

foreclosed consumers, the state's looted pension funds, and its cities and counties that lost money once guaranteed by Wall Street.

COHHIO is not alone in supporting Cordray's confirmation for this important job. We are joined by many important Ohio business leaders, including Les Wexner (Chairman and CEO, Limited Brands, Inc.), Al Ratner (board co-chair, Forest City Enterprises), Michael Morris (Chairman and CEO, American Electric Power), and John Pepper (former board chair and CEO, Procter and Gamble). As they said in a joint letter to the U.S. Senate, “As a County Treasurer, State Treasurer and State Attorney General, he has been the epitome of the judicious and fair-minded public servant. He has impressed us with his intelligence, pragmatism, integrity, and service-oriented mindset.”

Cordray's solid track record of integrity and fairness compelled Ohio Bankers League President Michael Van Buskirk to write a strong letter of recommendation for Mr. Cordray's Senate confirmation. This is significant, since the members of the Ohio Bankers League will be regulated by the bureau.

Cordray is genuine, thoughtful and smart. Ohio will miss his reasoned approach to complex issues and his unwavering fairness on behalf of ordinary Ohioans.

But Ohio's loss will be the nation's gain — or will it?

A camp of Republican Senators, including Ohio Senator Rob Portman, has promised to deny confirmation of any nominee unless the bureau's powers are first gutted. They want to create a council of federal banking and financial regulators who, with a simple majority vote, have the ability to overrule any CFPB initiatives.

Talk about your foxes guarding the henhouse! The banks will continue to basically regulate themselves. This is the same battle between ordinary Americans and powerful financial interests that we've been fighting for years.

After living through the Wild West of mortgage lending and the global financial disaster that occurred as a result, consumers finally got a federal police department. Now we need Richard Cordray – unwedded by special interests – to be the chief defender of the streets of financial America.



Bill Faith  
Executive Director

COHHIO's SSI Ohio Project presents  
**The Ohio Summit on  
 Discharge Planning and Homelessness**

**October 6, 2011**

OSU 4-H Building • 2201 Fred Taylor Drive • Columbus  
 8:30am - 4:30pm

RSVP to [emilyvanburen@cohhio.org](mailto:emilyvanburen@cohhio.org)

We'll bring together leaders and experts from homeless service providers, correctional institutions, hospitals, state departments, nursing homes, foster care, and the Veterans Administration to discuss policies of discharging institutions and ways to help end homelessness. Learn about current discharge practices and explore strategies for collaborations to increase efficiency and better serve clients. **Keynote speaker:** Stephen Metraux, Ph.D., deputy director of research at the Dept. of Veteran Affairs' National Center of Homelessness Among Veterans, and an Associate Professor of Health Policy at University of the Sciences in Philadelphia



## 'Passionate' SSI Ohio Specialist Led Struggling Client to Stability

*The SSI Ohio Project assists individuals who are disabled and homeless or at-risk apply for Social Security disability benefits. While the project's success is quantitatively measured with numbers and dollar figures, the true achievement of the SSI Ohio Project is when clients can achieve stability after so experiencing many struggles.*

As a client of the project, Laura is eager to share how her life has evolved after benefiting from the SSI Ohio Project.

Laura first applied for benefits in 2007. She says that, "I was in the hospital and I had just started medication for bi-polar disorder. My application went out the window." Later in 2008 Laura reapplied again- this time after a fire burned down her house. "I was all over the map after that," she explains. "I didn't secure an attorney. On my statements, I downplayed what my abilities were."

She reapplied in 2010. This time she secured a law firm. "They didn't do anything," says Laura. "I did the run-around and ended up trying to find all the medical records that had been destroyed in the fire. I went off my meds after that." At that point, Laura began to receive treatment at Community Support Services, Inc. (CSS), one of the first SSI Ohio Project sites in northeast Ohio.

It was there that Laura met SSI Ohio Specialist Twanette Pinkerton. "She's the one who helped me the most," Laura declares. "I don't know if she's an overachiever, but she

truly is passionate about getting people the help they need." From Laura's point of view, "[Twanette] is definitely more capable than your backyard attorney."

With Twanette's assistance, Laura's disability application was approved within a few months. Twanette was also able to help Laura unravel the red tape from the 2008 house fire that was preventing her from obtaining a Section 8 housing voucher. A short time after the issue was resolved, Laura moved from a motel room (paid for by her sister) to her very own apartment. "It was a lot of waiting, waiting, waiting," recalls Laura.

Now, Laura says, "I would like to get back to work." She currently has her temporary driver's permit and is "working on her drivers' license." Laura hopes to find a car, as she finds the bus system to be unreliable for getting to places on time. "I wish they had a program to help people who want to go back to work to get a car for transportation."

However, Laura credits Twanette and CSS with helping her get this far. "I wouldn't be able to do anything without SSI. ... Group and counseling have helped me with staying stable."

To learn more about the SSI Ohio Project, please visit <http://www.cohhio.org/SSI-2010.php>.



Laura (right) works with SSI Ohio Specialist Twanette Pinkerton at Community Support Services, Inc.



Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio's  
**Youth Empowerment Program**  
 ☆ "Uniting Youth for Social Change" ☆



## School officials learn about kids living homeless

*COHHIO's YEP provides training to homeless families or those at risk of homelessness. (Marietta Times article by Evan Bevins)*

If a parent doesn't know where he's going to spend the night or how she can afford food, making sure a child's math homework is finished might not be high on the priority list. (Read more)

That's why Marietta City Schools is teaming up with the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio to offer a training session on families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The families of 23 students in the district are considered homeless, according to government criteria.

"If a family doesn't have a place to live, if they're living in their car, if they are doubled up with another family ... the environment is not conducive to learning," said Joe Finley, principal at Phillips Elementary School and director of school improvement for the district. "To educators, homework is important. ... These people have more to worry about than homework."

Two identical, three-hour sessions will be offered on Aug. 15 at St. Mary School in Marietta. The program is open to families in need, agencies who work with them and "even community people that might be interested in that topic," Finley said.

For the last several years, the district has applied for and received a federal grant that allows it to contract with Washington County Children Services to assist families in need. Funding from the grant, which last year totaled

about \$48,000, is paying for the conference.

The goal, Finley said, is to help deal with and eliminate conditions that make it hard for a child to learn and for parents to help with their child's education.

Children Services diversion specialist Dottie Anderson works with 23 families in the district that are considered homeless by the federal government. For many of them, that means they're staying with another family or in a motel but a few of her clients are living in places like parks or cars.

"I have worked with families living in campers and sheds and all kinds of things out in the county," Anderson said.

The 23 families she assists in the Marietta district are comprised of 36 adults, 32 preschool children, 22 kindergarten through fifth-graders, five sixth- through eighth-graders and four high school students.

Anderson links clients with agencies like the Department of Job and Family Services that can provide resources for finding stable housing. She noted that while Washington County doesn't have the same level of homelessness found in larger cities, it also doesn't have the same resources.

"It would be nice if we had more help in our area for the homeless but we do what we can," she said.

Anderson said she hopes the conference will provide her with a better understanding of the homelessness problem and direct her to different resources she can use to help her clients.



Angela Lariviere,  
Youth Empowerment Director

[Back to Breaking Ground front page](#)

## 2011 NAEH Conference Overview

by *COHHIO's Jonda Clemings*

NAEH Director Nan Roman eloquently set the tone for this year's National Alliance to End Homelessness Conference in her introductory speech, *Things are not OK the way they are*. "It is not OK that nearly 700,000 people are homeless every night," she began. "It is not OK that youth, who should be being nurtured and educated and only then nudged out the door to independence, are instead being tossed onto the street with no one to love them or show them the way forward. It is not OK that veterans – young men and women who have gone to war out of patriotism, or been willing to go to war – those who have perhaps the greatest claim to home, have none. ..."

Nan Roman's speech was a powerful reminder of the importance of change and of utilizing proven best practices in homeless services and programs to drive home the mission of ending homelessness.

Change not only needs to happen in how we allocate resources, but also in how we help organizations build their capacity and utilize new strategies of ending homelessness, including prevention, diversion, linkage to community resources, increasing the turnover rate of our shelter and transitional housing beds to house more people without increasing

bed numbers, and transforming transitional programs into permanent housing programs.

Conference workshops focused on using data to assess what works, developing coordinated intake, effective targeting homeless programs through triage assessments, coordination amongst partners, and more.

Ohio was well represented this year with around 50 participants and of those ten participating in panel presentations. COHHIO's own Angela Lariviere presented at the conference on *Making the Case: Effective Advocacy Strategies for Youth Providers*. While in DC, a group also spent time advocating with our Ohio Legislators. The legislative asks this year included requesting funds for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants, SAMHSA Homeless Services, new HUD-VASH and homeless demonstration project vouchers, and Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs. Advocates shared how these funds have been successfully utilized in Ohio and how the additional funds would aid Ohio in ending homelessness.

For those who were unable to attend this year's conference, you can download training materials at <http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/2011nationalconferencepresentations>



*Nan Roman,  
executive director, NAEH*



*Jonda Clemings*

## COHHIO Members Save Big on Workers' Comp Premiums

COHHIO member organizations are eligible to save up to 51 percent – the highest permitted by the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation -- by joining the COHHIO/Frank Gates Group Rating Program for July 1, 2012.

Current participants in the 2011 COHHIO/Frank Gates program will receive information about their renewals in the next few months. Members not in the COHHIO program will be contacted by Frank Gates to review their claims history and determine a possible discount offer.

The more COHHIO members that join the program, the greater the range of possible discounts that Frank Gates can offer.

If you have questions about the COHHIO/Frank Gates Group Rating Program or if you would like a free, no-Obligation policy review to calculate your premium discount (and identify other premium reduction options) please contact our Frank Gates representative, Todd Spence, at 800-777-4283 extension 2796 or at [tspence@frankgates.com](mailto:tspence@frankgates.com). Join the COHHIO/Frank Gates Group Rating Program and save in 2012!



[Back to \*Breaking Ground\* front page](#)

## Support COHHIO through your Workplace Campaign

As a supporter of COHHIO, you are well aware of the work we do throughout the community – from protecting the Ohio Housing Trust Fund from budget raids to protecting consumers from harmful financial products to advancing affordable and supportive housing projects and programs.

Wondering how you can help be a part of our cause? It's easier than you think!

As a member of Community Shares of Mid Ohio, COHHIO can benefit through giving campaigns at workplaces throughout central Ohio. During campaigns, Community Shares collects donations for its coalition of more than 60 nonprofits, COHHIO included. Each individual donor selects a charity or group of charities to receive their donation based on

which organization is working on the issues and causes they care about most in their community.

These incredibly important donations go into our general fund, which supports our advocacy work. You can help by encouraging your workplace to start a workplace giving campaign.

Workplace giving campaigns take place every fall in numerous workplaces throughout central Ohio. Unsure if you can donate to COHHIO through Community Shares in the next workplace giving campaign? Check out the [Community Shares website](#) to find out which workplaces COHHIO will be participating this year or how your workplace can be added!



## We Believe Ohio's Rev. Tim Ahrens Speaks Out in Opposition to Issue 2

Fairness has always been a driving theme in the religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The holy scriptures and the stories of faith that embed all our traditions call on laborers and employers to carve pathways toward justice and mercy. It is from this vantage point that we write to oppose Ohio Ballot Issue 2, the law that rescinds fairness and collective bargaining in our state.

The interdependence of faith and labor is well documented. Rev. Dr. Washington Gladden, a pastor at The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Columbus, wrote nearly 100 years ago: "...The labor question is in part an economic question, and all economic questions are fundamentally religious questions...there are no people who need moral guidance more than those who are grappling with the manifold phases of the labor question."

As our employment and economic woes deepen in Ohio, We Believe Ohio is calling on pastors, priests, rabbis, imams, and religious leaders across Ohio to address issues of faith and work from pulpits, bimahs and minibars; and to examine the places we have broken trust and created injustices between workers and employers.

Employment injustice is a dominant theme in our state. The over-employed work long hours in six and seven day work weeks with little to no additional compensation. The under-employed scramble to piece together two and three jobs with no benefits or perks. The unemployed are out of work; some are churning through savings, others are sinking into debt, but all are struggling to survive as unemployment payments end. We count over 529,000 Ohioans in this category alone.

Yet there is a frightening new force at work to undermine fairness within the public sector where 360,000 Ohioans currently DO work. These men and women have made financial sacrifices that have saved Ohio taxpayers \$250 million and an additional \$100 million in health care costs.

They are our teachers, police, firefighters, state highway patrol officers, nurses, and public workers who have done their part to help government make ends meet by taking pay freeze five times in nine years and taking furlough days off without pay. Now they're under assault through Ballot Issue 2.

Tim Dove, the 2010 Ohio Teacher of the Year, is one of them. Like tens of thousands of other teachers, Mr. Dove works long hours teaching and nurturing our children and young adults. He is dynamic, dedicated and determined to make a difference in the lives of his students. Along with police, firefighters, state highway patrol, nurses and all public employees, teachers are facing the end of benefits, collective bargaining and much more if Issue 2 passes on the November ballot. Issue 2 must be defeated.

Governor John Kasich, a majority of state legislators, and the powerful money behind them are working together to destroy labor rights in an already fragile Ohio economy.

But the voice of opposition is much louder: more than 70% of Ohioans support collective bargaining. And with 529,000 Ohioans looking for work, we believe it is wrong and immoral to deny 360,000 employed, tax-paying public servants of their rights and quite possibly, their livelihoods.

As a religious leader in Columbus and Ohio, I stand with my sisters and brothers and the children and families of Ohio to oppose Issue 2. It is immoral. It is bad law. It gives employers rights they do not need and strips employees of rights they do need.

Most people of faith don't have high-priced lobbyists making our case in Columbus. But we are strengthened by centuries of religious wisdom and the clear conviction that taking needed rights away from workers and putting them in the hands of powerful politicians who show no interest in protecting the common good is unjust and immoral. We believe Issue 2 should be defeated.

— Rev. Tim Ahrens



Rev. Tim Ahrens  
Sr. Minister,  
The First Congregational  
Church  
United Church of Christ  
And a founder of  
We Believe Ohio