



May 12, 2016

Ohio Governor John R. Kasich
30th Floor; Riffe Center
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

OLBC Members

OLBC President
Rep. Alicia Reece

Rep. Michael Ashford

Rep. Janine Boyd

Rep. Kevin Boyce

Sen. Edna Brown

Rep. Hearcel Craig

Rep. Stephanie Howse

Rep. Christie Kuhns

Minority Leader
Rep. Fred Strahorn

Rep. Emilia Sykes

Sen. Charleta Tavares

Sen. Cecil Thomas

Sen. Sandra Williams

Dear Governor Kasich,

Legislation that will soon reach your desk threatens to take away good-paying Ohio jobs that can transform and uplift minority communities across our state. House Bill 180 will take away the freedom of local communities to set local hiring goals for publicly financed infrastructure projects in their neighborhoods. This will disproportionately hurt African American workers in communities like Cleveland and Akron, urban cores that are using local hiring goals to get residents back to work.

In February, the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus held our annual day of action, in part to highlight solutions to the disproportionately high African American unemployment we face in Ohio. The local hiring ban that HB 180 proposes, however, will mean one less tool in the toolbox for urban communities trying to combat local unemployment. The state too will have one less tool to expand minority participation on public projects – a problem the Ohio Department of Transportation recently identified in their disparity study.

Governor, you and ODOT both have referenced local hiring standards used in Cleveland's Opportunity Corridor in a positive light, underscoring how the Opportunity Corridor project is increasing minority workforce participation and lifting up the local community. It is disheartening then that the legislature would pass a bill to take all of that away. ODOT spends billions of dollars on transportation infrastructure, but the legislature prevented even a small portion of that from being used to target local workforce participation goals.

This local hiring ban will ultimately have a dangerous and untold reach into our metropolitan areas, which will disproportionately impact African Americans who live there and remain unemployed at a rate two times higher than the state average – in some communities as much as seven times higher.

Instead of strengthening local minority communities in Cincinnati, Akron or Cleveland, this unfair ban means it will be harder to connect African Americans with job training through work in our local communities. By banning local hiring goals, we are handcuffing our communities from making economic development decisions that put more money in the pockets of local residents and more money into local economies. House Bill 180 will only send good paying Ohio jobs out of state.

We respectfully ask that you veto this anti-jobs legislation, House Bill 180, and sit down with members of the OLBC to discuss this legislation and ideas we have to lift African American communities throughout our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alicia Reece".

President Alicia Reece, The Ohio Legislative Black Caucus