



# UNITED SENIORS OF ATHENS COUNTY, INC.

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**TESTIMONY BEFORE  
THE OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
April 6, 2011**

Chairman Balderson and Committee Members:

My name is Mike Turner. I am Executive Director of United Seniors of Athens County, Inc. We are the Nationally Accredited, Multi-Purpose, Focal Point Senior Center serving all of Athens County, Ohio. I also serving as President of the Ohio Association of Senior Centers which is a member organization representing 100 Senior Centers throughout all of the Great State of Ohio. I am currently a member of the Southeast Ohio Community Advisory Panel for the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Council. I would like to address the merits of this program.

The safety net is in tatters due to terrible economic conditions. The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is needed more now than ever. OCC is accessible help with utility bills for low income rate payers. OCC is a voice of reason when utility companies are unreasonable and demand excessive rate increases or unjustified relief from regulations. Limiting OCC would leave many low income customers without a voice and all rate payers without the help they deserve. Utility companies have all the legal help they want. Most rate payers can not afford to pay for legal help so OCC is their voice. The best part is, OCC has it's own funding source which is not from the General Revenue Fund. OCC revenue comes from a small fee per household so cutting the OCC budget would only be a windfall for utility companies and would not result in any benefit to rate payers or help balance the budget.

Please fully fund OCC to protect Ohio citizens.

Mike Turner,  
Executive Director