



*Minority Leader*

**Nickie J. Antonio**  
State Senator 23<sup>rd</sup> District

**Committees**

Transportation - *Ranking*  
Rules & Reference - *Ranking*  
Joint Legislative Ethics  
Legislative Service Commission

**U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform**  
**Task Force on Defending Constitutional Rights and Exposing Institutional Abuses**  
**Senator Nickie J. Antonio, Senate Minority Leader**  
**June 3, 2026**

Chairman Gill, Ranking Member Simon, and members of this task force, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

During my 16 years in the Ohio legislature, I have served as ranking member on the House and Senate Health Committees. I have witnessed the impact of Ohio's Medicaid program on the state's most vulnerable. It is a privilege to be a steward of the hard-earned taxpayer dollars that fund our programs, and doing everything we can to prevent fraud is certainly an important part of that stewardship.

In 2014, I was one of ten legislators appointed to the inaugural Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee (JMOC). JMOC's purpose was to provide oversight to "improve the rate of spending and quality of Medicaid care." JMOC proved true and effective to its mission when it [exposed](#) problems with Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) who were strong-arming pharmacists and using anti-competitive business practices. As a result of JMOC's oversight, Ohio created the Single PBM system currently in operation, saving Ohio Medicaid over [\\$140 million dollars](#).

In 2025, this bicameral, bipartisan oversight committee was [abolished](#) by the Republican majority. Why? Some [question](#) the timing; JMOC was conducting an investigation into contracts with Gainwell, the nation's largest Medicaid claims processor. Coincidence? I don't know. What I do know is that Democrats in the legislature were opposed to dismantling JMOC.

We are here to talk about exposing institutional abuses.

While Ohioans struggle to afford to put food on the table, fill their gas tank, or pay their skyrocketing utility bills, the republican majority has continuously shown how out-of-touch they are. They've prioritized handouts to the wealthy and well-connected on the backs of hardworking, everyday Ohioans.

- At the top of the list is the largest public corruption case in Ohio history, [House Bill 6](#) – a \$61 million dark money bribery and racketeering scandal that put the former Republican Speaker of the House in federal prison for 20 years;
- The Administration has refused to pay nursing homes almost [\\$1 billion](#) in backpay, despite being ordered by the Ohio Supreme Court to do so; and
- Given [\\$1.6 billion](#) in tax breaks – 1.4 billion **more** than the administration calculated – to the wealthy tech corporations to build data centers that place heavy resource burdens on local communities.

Republicans' one-party veto-proof rule has controlled the state for the last 15 consecutive years. They hold the House, the Senate, the Governor's Office, and the four statewide offices. If there is fraud in Medicaid, it has happened on the Republican Majority's watch. Perhaps it is time to clean Ohio's house.

Recently, Senator Ernst opined that (and I [quote](#)), "Government employees [are] caught with their hands in the cookie jar, abusing their positions for personal gain."

Ohio Republicans appear to be emulating the playbook of the White House. The President of the United States is fleecing taxpayers across the country to fight endless wars, attempting to bankroll numerous vanity projects, and trying to stick his hand in a \$1.8 billion cookie jar made especially for January 6th insurrectionists.

With an unpopular Republican gubernatorial candidate and even more out-of-touch policies – I'm not surprised we suddenly have a call for fraud reform in Ohio Medicaid. If there is fraud, we should root it out and remedy the situation. I am surprised that Republicans somehow think they are not responsible, as the supervision of the Department of Medicaid has happened on their watch.

I applaud the goal of this task force, Mr. Chair, which was described as (and I [quote](#)), "going after institutions that stopped fearing accountability and abused the American people."

We should absolutely be doing everything we can to expose and prevent fraud; use new technologies to provide oversight and accountability. These are not – should not – be partisan, but should be a welcome part of any system that serves the people.

Members of my caucus and I are ready to work with everyone to tackle issues of fraud, especially the abuse of taxpayer dollars, which is, in essence, abuse of the American people. We must maintain fiscal responsibility, while ensuring that Medicaid is available to those eligible: people who are aged, blind, disabled, children and families in need.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I will do my best to answer any questions.

Exhibit A:

## Ohio One-Party Government Control 2011-2026

Year	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Governor	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Senate	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
House	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Attorney General	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Auditor	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Secretary of State	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Treasurer	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R

|----- Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee\* -----|

|----- **REPUBLICAN SUPERMAJORITY** -----|

*\*Ohio Republicans passed House Bill 96 in 2025 on a partisan vote to eliminate the Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee. Republican Gov. Mike DeWine signed the bill.*