

## Inside



### Building Black, Breaking Barriers, and Facing the City's Wrath: Winston Willis

For much of the 1960s, Winston Willis shifted his investments, pouring money into businesses that wouldn't attract the same kind of racial backlash.

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# CLEVELAND OBSERVER

Since 2018

"Engage ... Educate ... Empower."

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## Krayzie Bone Partners with Euclid High School Students



Staff Writer

The Grammy Award-winning artist Anthony "Krayzie Bone" Henderson and his nonprofit, Spread the Love Foundation (STLF), partnered with students at Euclid High School to share real-world business, marketing, and music experiences that could help students in their future careers.

The program kicked off on March 7, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Euclid High School. The event included a tour of the school's facilities, a visit to the Media Center, lunch at the newly created Bristol, and a brief introduction for students interested in joining the program. Krayzie Bone was present to engage with students and launch the initiative.



Anthony "Krayzie Bone" Henderson and D. Lorand Jackson

Credit: Ron Calhoun

### What Students Are Learning

STLF members will work with students through mid-May, providing hands-on experience in:

- Designing marketing materials
- Creating and managing social



Euclid students, teachers administrators, and with Ohio Senator Kent Smith pose with Anthony "Krayzie Bone" Henderson. Credit: Ron Calhoun

- media posts
- Editing and producing video clips
- Helping with sales and merchandise
- Working with music engineers and producers

Some students will also be able to volunteer at STLF events over the summer.

### Why This Partnership Matters

"We are excited to work with Euclid High School's CTE Program. Collaborating with Spread the Love Foundation can help students build real-world skills and prepare for successful futures.

Career and technical education is important, and we are proud to be part of shaping the next generation," said D. Lorand Jackson, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Spread the Love Foundation.

Students in the CTE Entrepreneurship & Marketing

program look forward to the experience. "This partnership will give our students hands-on experience in marketing, branding, and business while also helping Spread the Love reach more people," said Kayla Lupean, CTE Entrepreneurship & Marketing Instructor at Euclid High School.

### About Spread the Love Foundation

Spread the Love Foundation (STLF) is a nonprofit organization founded by Krayzie Bone from Bone Thugs-N-Harmony. The group supports youth programs, helps needy families, and promotes fairness in the community.

Spread the Love Foundation is commissioned by Krayzie Bone to fundraise and erect the Bone Thugs-N-Harmony Urban Arts Academy & Ohio Hip-Hop Museum in Glenville.

The Urban Arts Academy will be a paid internship certificate

program where ages 18-26 will sharpen their skills and talents by learning from entertainment industry professionals. It will offer four curriculum tracks, and students can choose to complete one or all four tracks.

The academy will be a museum dedicated to Ohio's contribution to hip-hop culture and entertainment. It also offers programming for Cleveland Municipal School District students to supplement arts education and career guidance in the arts.

STLF advocacy also includes petitioning for Hip-Hop culture to be recognized and installed as a part of the Cleveland Cultural Gardens.

To learn more, visit [www.spreadtheloveoh.com](http://www.spreadtheloveoh.com). For questions, call Ossie Mae Neal at (216) 816-0414, or email [info@spreadtheloveoh.com](mailto:info@spreadtheloveoh.com).

## Diversity in Education is Now Seen as a Threat



By Marissa Valentine



The Oxford Dictionary defines diversity as the "practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders and sexual orientations."

Diversity allows students of various backgrounds, religions, learning styles, and abilities to

obtain the same education as their peers by ensuring that higher education institutions like Ohio State, Cleveland State, and any other state-funded university admit heterogeneous or mixed groups of students.

Since the Trump administration's upheaval of the Department of Education, terms like diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) have become words weaponized against educational institutions.

Local Ohio universities, including Ohio State University and the University of Cincinnati,

have recently been investigated by the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights for alleged race-related discrimination.

This investigation follows the Department of Education's latest "Dear Colleague" letter, which was sent on Feb. 14 to public education institutions from K-12 through publicly funded universities and outlines concerns and guidelines regarding race-based discrimination.

In recent years, concerns have emerged regarding race-based policies in American educational institutions, with

allegations that some practices have disadvantaged students of various racial backgrounds, including white and Asian students from low-income families.

Critics argue that race-conscious policies in admissions, financial aid, hiring, training, and other institutional programs have influenced many aspects of academia.

Additionally, some institutions have implemented race-based graduation ceremonies, housing policies, and programming,

Continued on page 4

## Opinion: Building Black, Breaking Barriers, and Facing the City's Wrath: Winston Willis



By Ajah Hale

*These are the views expressed solely by the writer and not necessarily those of The Cleveland Observer.*

*This three-part series explores the rise, destruction, and ongoing fight for justice surrounding Winston Willis' lost empire:*

**Part 1: The Rise of a Black Business Titan** – How Willis built his fortune, overcame racial terrorism, and created a thriving Black business district.

**Part 2: The City's War Against Willis** – The media smear campaign, legal battles, and political attacks that led to the dismantling of his empire.



### Challenging the System: A New Kind of Black-Owned Development

The Housing Act of 1949 gave cities broad powers under eminent domain, allowing them to seize land under the guise of “urban renewal.”

By the 1960s, this had evolved into a strategy benefiting universities and hospitals, creating “Eds and Meds” districts like modern-day University Circle.

#### Here's how it worked:

- The City used eminent domain to force out Black residents.
- The City demolished the homes and sold the land to institutions like Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, and Case Western Reserve University—all subsidized by federal dollars.
- 20,000 Black Clevelanders were displaced.

#### Willis wanted change

In 1968, fate intervened. The night the Glenville Riots broke

The corner of E. 105th street and Euclid Avenue became a self-sufficient Black business district.

His holdings included gas stations, restaurants, retail shops, and entertainment venues—including the Scrumpy Dump Theater.

For the first time, Black Clevelanders had a place to work and play—right in the heart of University Circle.

But Willis' success put him in direct competition with University Circle Inc., the city-backed powerhouse controlling the district's redevelopment.

Because the City couldn't control him, they made him public enemy number one.

#### Big Bad Winston: The Smear Campaign Begins

The first attack was on his character. The Plain Dealer published content calling Willis a smut king, pornography king, and criminal—ignoring his dozens of legitimate businesses.

- Utility companies cut off power to his buildings, leaving his tenants in the cold as news crews reported on the situation.
- In August 1971, a reporter from The Plain Dealer interviewed Willis and his family, claiming they wanted to profile a successful Black businessman. When the article was published, the headline read: “Pornography King's Empire Grows Fast.”

Even though adult theaters were just a fraction of his portfolio, that's all the media focused on. “He did not make the movies, he did not create them, but he distributed them,” his sister Aundra Willis Carrasco said. “So no, he was not a Porn King.”

#### The Beginning of the End

With the media painting him as a dangerous criminal, the City had all the justification it needed to target his empire. How did they bring him down? Through a web of legal battles, backdoor deals, and outright theft.

In the final part of our series, we'll expose the shocking details of how Cleveland erased Winston Willis' legacy—and why he still refuses to back down today.



Winston Willis, an entrepreneur and businessman.

**Part 3: The Erasure of Winston Willis** – How the City seized his properties, erased his legacy, and why Cleveland still refuses to acknowledge what was taken from him.

#### The Sankofa Series: Winston Willis Part 2

For much of the 1960s, Winston Willis shifted his investments, pouring money into businesses that wouldn't attract the same kind of racial backlash.

These included number houses, restaurants, corner stores, and adult theaters—industries that were lucrative but not considered a direct challenge to white corporate dominance.

But Willis' vision was much bigger than quiet survival.

out, Willis was in the back of his restaurant, The Hot Potato, locked in a serious game of craps.

He started with \$420. Three days later, he walked away with half a million dollars.

“I'm going to buy some real estate!” he told his sister. And that's precisely what he did.

#### The Rise of University Circle Properties Development

Willis invested his winnings in University Circle Properties Development (UCPD), a company that would make him a significant threat to the City's power structure.

Between 1968 and 1971, Willis built an empire—28 businesses, employing over 700 Black Clevelanders and generating over \$2 million annually.

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— FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME... AND LEBRON JAMES —



# KING James



**THE CAST:**  
Robert Hunter & Michael Patrick Trimm

**MARCH 1 - 23 | OUTCALT THEATRE**

by RAJIV JOSEPH | directed by MONTEZE FREELAND  
a co-production with CITY THEATRE COMPANY in Pittsburgh, PA

In the world of basketball, LeBron James is the king. But to die-hard Clevelanders like Shawn and Matt, “King James” is a god, and their fandom forges their unlikely bond. Set in a bar in Cleveland Heights and spanning LeBron’s rookie season to the 2016 NBA Championship, the men navigate their turbulent friendship through their shared love of the game. From the first quarter to the final jump shot, *King James* comes in clutch as a riveting love letter to our beloved home, “Believeland.” Filled with humor, jabs, steps, offensive fouls, and great poignancy, this energetic new play by Pulitzer Prize finalist Rajiv Joseph is an intimate exploration of the place that sports occupy in our lives and in our relationships with others.

— TO LIFE! —



# Fiddler on the Roof

**APRIL 26 - MAY 18 | ALLEN THEATRE**

book by JERRY BOCK, music by SHELDON HARNICK & lyrics by JOSEPH STEIN  
directed by MICHAEL BARAKIVA

“Tradition!” The word immediately invokes the venerated pillars of faith, family, and friendship. But in the Russian shtetl of Anatevka, Tevye the milkman and his wife, Golde, must walk the fine line of balancing tradition with turn-of-the-century progressiveness. A deeply moving tale about community and generational values, *Fiddler on the Roof* is a heartwarming story of fathers and daughters, husbands and wives, and love and laughter. “L’Chaim!”

## Dismantling DEI Will Impact K-12 Education



By Shamani Salahuddin

On Feb. 14, the U.S. Department of Education launched marching orders threatening all public institutions to eliminate all diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives or risk losing federal funding. This mandate left public school and university administrators wondering what this means for students' education in the future.

DEI initiatives in schools aimed to create a welcoming environment for all students, embracing all cultures and differences. The diversity component of DEI is often at the forefront of political criticism, but the equity, and inclusion components support students with physical or learning disabilities.

Funding at risk includes Title IV, student loans, state funding for curriculum development, free or reduced-price lunch programs, and support for students with special needs.

Craig Trainor, the department's acting assistant secretary for civil rights, issued a letter directing all entities, from day cares to universities receiving financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education to eliminate programs and policies that "teach students that certain racial groups bear unique moral burdens that others do not."

However, teachers and administrators find the directive



vague and don't understand how to abide by it. The directive is vague because it does not clearly define what lessons or programs are considered problematic. Here are a few reasons why they may struggle to follow it:

- 1. Unclear Definitions** The directive states that schools should not teach that certain racial groups bear "unique moral burdens," but it does not explain what this means in practical terms. Does it apply to lessons on historical injustices, like slavery and segregation, or only to specific classroom activities?
- 2. Impact on Existing Programs** Many schools have diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs, and history and social studies lessons that discuss racism. Without clear guidance, educators may be unsure if these programs violate the directive.

- 3. Fear of Misinterpretation** Administrators may worry that different people (such as parents, school boards, or government officials) will interpret the directive differently, leading to confusion about what is allowed.
- 4. Lack of Specific Examples** The directive does not provide concrete examples of lessons or activities that should be changed, making it difficult for educators to know what adjustments, if any, are needed.
- 5. Legal and Ethical Concerns** Teachers may feel caught between following the directive and their responsibility to teach accurate history and discuss important social issues.

Without further clarification, schools may struggle to balance following the directive with maintaining meaningful discussions about

history, diversity, and fairness in education.

Cynthia Jackson-Hammond, president of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation addressed this issue on NPR's Morning Edition.

"There's a fine line between removing programs that are considered to be discriminatory by race and removing programs that speak to a cultural or ethnicity support for students," she said.

*Shamani Salahuddin is a freelance journalist based in Middle Tennessee. Her work has been published in Nashville's largest newspaper, the Tennessean, and its affiliate publication, Southern Kitchen.*

## Diversity in Education is Now Seen as a Threat

From front page

raising debates over whether these practices promote inclusion or reinforce division.

Some people disagree about DEI programs in schools. There are some who believe these programs focus too much on race and may create more division instead of bringing people together. Others think DEI programs help fix unfairness from the past and give more chances to students from different backgrounds.

The letter, which goes on for several more paragraphs, explains how the Department of Education believes that teaching about the history and ancestors of minority and non-white students can sometimes be "stereotypical" or even a form of "indoctrination."

Lastly, the letter states that universities failing to comply with the vague guidelines could risk losing federal funding. However, it is peculiar that Ohio State would now come under investigation,

given that university President Ted Carter sent out a statement to students at the end of February noting the closure of the Ohio State Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to keep the

university in federal compliance.

According to an article by Katie Millard of NBC4, Ohio State's participation in The PhD Project, a program aimed at increasing business opportunities through

diversity, has made the university the Department of Education's most recent DEI witch hunt target.

As words meant to build a bridge of opportunity and access for all students become weapons for exclusion, we must continue to educate ourselves on the many new bills and legislations that continue to negatively impact the progress of students, teachers, and families nationwide.

We must ask, "What harm is being caused to others when access to opportunities is made available to groups historically denied access?"

We must continue to question the dismantling of education, as education empowers all groups of people to ask, learn, and process information for both personal progression and societal progress.



## City Council Legislation Undergoes First Reading: February-March 2025



The Cleveland Observer is dedicated to informing residents about legislative activities under review. By reporting on ordinances and resolutions during their initial stages, the Observer enables community members to engage with their Council members, providing feedback or expressing support before final decisions are made.

### How Your Tax Dollars are Being Spent

Cleveland City Council introduced a series of ordinances and resolutions during its meetings during the last four weeks.

These measures address many issues, including infrastructure improvements, public safety, community development, and economic growth. After their first readings, the legislation was referred to the appropriate city departments and committees for further scrutiny before advancing toward final passage.

The legislative process involves multiple steps to ensure transparency and accountability. Following the first reading, each ordinance or resolution undergoes detailed review by city departments and committees. This is followed by a second reading and additional discussion during the meeting, where members debate and refine the proposals before a final vote.

*This is a ChatGPT-generated summary report from the City Record published weekly on [www.clevelandcitycouncil.org](http://www.clevelandcitycouncil.org)*

### February 24, 2025 Emergency Ordinances Read in Full and Passed

#### Ord. No. 218-2025 Ward 7 Beautification & Litter Program

**Sponsor:** Howse-Jones  
**Summary:** Amends Section 1 of Ordinance No. 117-2025 to authorize the Department of Public Works to enter into an agreement with Famicos Foundation for a 2024 Beautification & Litter Program in Ward 7. Funded by Casino Revenue Funds.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 219-2025 Ward 10 Beautification & Litter Program

**Sponsor:** Hairston  
**Summary:** Amends Section 1 of Ordinance No. 118-2025 to



authorize the Department of Public Works to enter into an agreement with Famicos Foundation for a 2024 Beautification & Litter Program in Ward 10. Funded by Casino Revenue Funds.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 220-2025 Mayor's Report and Budget Estimate

**Sponsor:** McCormack  
**Summary:** Amends Section 123.05 of the Codified Ordinances to require the Mayor to submit an annual report and budget estimate, including past-year budgets, employee headcounts, and pay bands.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 221-2025 Wireless Internet Services for City Council

**Sponsor:** Griffin  
**Summary:** Authorizes the Clerk of Council to agree with NetX Internet LLC to provide wireless internet service to Cleveland City Council, including installation, equipment, maintenance, and 100MB of data per month.  
**Funding Amount:** \$1,199 per month

#### Ord. No. 222-2025 Permit for Amazing AKA 5K Run

**Sponsor:** Conwell  
**Summary:** Approves issuing a permit for the Amazing AKA 5K Run on September 28, 2025, managed by Hermes Sports & Events. Requires street closures as determined by the Chief of Police and full indemnification for the City of Cleveland.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### First Reading Emergency Ordinances Referred

#### Ord. No. 217-2025 Sponsorship for Student Work/Study Program

**Sponsor:** Griffin  
**Summary:** Authorizes the Clerk of Council to agree with Saint Martin De Porres High School to sponsor students for work/study positions with Cleveland City Council.  
**Funding Amount:** \$30,200

#### Ord. No. 227-2025 Audit and Review of Council

#### Communications Sponsor: Griffin

**Summary:** Amends the agreement with JS Strategies, LLC for professional services related to auditing, reviewing, and assessing Cleveland City Council's communication programs.  
**Funding Amount:** \$55,000

#### Ord. No. 228-2025 Amendment of Criminal Nuisance Ordinance

**Sponsors:** Polensek, Griffin (by departmental request)  
**Summary:** Amends Sections 630.01 and 630.02 of the Codified Ordinances of Cleveland, relating to criminal activity nuisances and their abatement.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 229-2025 Lease Agreement for Prospect International Airport Services

**Sponsors:** McCormack, Griffin (by departmental request)  
**Summary:** Amends Ordinance No. 1052-2024 to change the name of Prospect International Airport Services Corporation to Prospect International Airport Services, LLC.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 230-2025 Fire Protection System Maintenance

**Sponsors:** Kazy, Griffin (by departmental request)  
**Summary:** Renews contract with Johnson Controls Fire Protection LP for inspecting, testing, and servicing fire protection and life safety systems.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 231-2025 Property Transfer for Redevelopment

**Sponsors:** Starr, Hairston, Griffin (by departmental request)  
**Summary:** Transfers several permanent parcels near East 75th Street and Grand Avenue to the Department of Economic Development for future redevelopment.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 232-2025

#### Routine Maintenance of State Route 176

**Sponsors:** Bishop, Griffin (by departmental request)  
**Summary:** Authorizes an agreement with the Ohio Department of Transportation for routine maintenance and repairs on State Route 176.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 233-2025 Resurfacing of City Streets

**Sponsors:** Bishop, Griffin (by departmental request)  
**Summary:** Determines the method for resurfacing city streets and authorizes contracts for pavement grinding.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 234-2025 IT Support for Port Control

**Sponsors:** McCormack, Griffin (by departmental request)  
**Summary:** Authorizes the Director of Port Control to employ consultants for IT support, maintenance, and software acquisition.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 235-2025 Rock Salt Procurement for City Streets

**Sponsors:** Bishop, Griffin (by departmental request)  
**Summary:** Authorizes contracts to purchase rock salt for city streets during winter months.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 237-2025 Public Health Staffing Agreement

**Sponsors:** Conwell, Griffin (by departmental request)  
**Summary:** Amends contract with Ohio Public Health Association to provide additional temporary staffing.  
**Funding Amount:** \$100,000

#### Ord. No. 238-2025 Funding Amendment for Engineering Services

**Sponsors:** McCormack, Griffin (by departmental request)  
**Summary:** Amends Ordinance No. 402-2022 to add funding source for engineering and design services.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 239-2025 Database Management System for Motor Vehicle Maintenance

**Sponsors:** Bishop, Griffin (by departmental request)  
**Summary:** Authorizes contracts with FASTER Asset Solutions for software licenses, maintenance, and system support.  
**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### Ord. No. 240-2025 Passenger Boarding Bridges at Cleveland Hopkins Airport

**Sponsors:** McCormack, Griffin (by departmental request)

Continued on page 6

## City Council Legislation Undergoes First Reading:

From page 5

**Summary:** Authorizes contracts for the design, procurement, and construction of up to 13 passenger boarding bridges at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified

### Ord. No. 242-2025

#### Addition to Northeast Ohio Advanced Energy District

**Sponsors:** McCormack, Hairston, Griffin (by departmental request)

**Summary:** Approves adding property at 2164-2214 West 25th Street to the Northeast Ohio Advanced Energy District and imposes special assessments for energy improvements.

**Funding Amount:** \$18,980,360

### Ord. No. 243-2025

#### Highland Park Golf Course Fee Amendments

**Sponsors:** Bishop, Griffin (by departmental request)

**Summary:** Amends Ordinance No. 521-2024 to revise rates for Highland Park Golf Course and banquet room rentals.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified

### Ord. No. 244-2025

#### Social Support Services Contract Amendment

**Sponsors:** Bishop, Griffin (by departmental request)

**Summary:** Amends contract with Murtis Taylor Human Services System for social support services.

**Funding Amount:** \$230,303

### Ord. No. 245-2025

#### Medical Billing Services Amendment

**Sponsor:** Griffin (by departmental request)

**Summary:** Amends Ordinance No. 75-2024 to adjust funding allocations for medical billing and compliance services.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified

### Ord. No. 246-2025

#### Property Exchange Agreement for JFK High School Stadium

**Sponsors:** Jones, Bishop, Hairston, Griffin (by departmental request)

**Summary:** Authorizes property exchange between the City and CMSD for the construction of JFK High School Athletic Stadium.

**Funding Amount:** \$2.1 million

### Ord. No. 250-2025

#### Tax Abatement Adjustment for Block Group 390351188001

**Sponsor:** Griffin

**Summary:** Exempts certain property parcels from tax abatement policies under Ordinance No. 482-2022, allowing them to receive more favorable tax benefits.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified  
March 7, 2025, First Reading  
Emergency Ordinances Referred

### Ord. No. 293-2025

#### High-Voltage Static Transmission Maintenance

**Sponsors:** Kazy, Griffin (by departmental request)

**Summary:** Authorizes the purchase of materials, equipment, supplies, and services for the

maintenance and repair of high-voltage static transmission pipe-type cable system components for the Division of Cleveland Public Power. Includes provisions for emergency oil spill cleanup.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified

### Ord. No. 294-2025

#### Roof Maintenance for Public Utilities

**Sponsors:** Kazy, Griffin (by departmental request)

**Summary:** Authorizes a two-year contract for labor and materials to maintain, test, evaluate, repair, and replace roofs and related appurtenances for various divisions within the Department of Public Utilities.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified

### Ord. No. 303-2025

#### Air Quality Monitoring Equipment Purchase

**Sponsors:** Conwell, Griffin (by departmental request)

**Summary:** Amends Ordinance No. 549-2023 to authorize a contract with Teledyne API to purchase air monitoring equipment using an Ohio EPA grant for the Division of Air Quality, Department of Public Health.

**Funding Amount:** \$260,000

### Ord. No. 304-2025

#### Solid Waste Collection Regulations Update

**Sponsors:** Bishop, Griffin (by departmental request)

**Summary:** Amends Section 551.111 of the Codified Ordinances to regulate the maximum amount of solid waste, yard waste, and special waste items that can be collected. Introduces penalties for non-compliance.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified

### Ord. No. 305-2025

#### Dumpster and Tire Shredding Fees Update

**Sponsors:** Bishop, Griffin (by departmental request)

**Summary:** Amends Sections 551.112 and 551.301 of the Codified Ordinances to update fees for dumpster and compactor rentals and to increase the tire shredding service charge for privately hauled tires.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified

### Ord. No. 306-2025

#### Tire Disposal Contract

**Sponsors:** Bishop, Griffin (by departmental request)

**Summary:** Authorizes a two-year requirement contract for the transfer and disposal of tires for the Division of Waste Collection and Disposal, Department of Public Works.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified

#### March 7, 2025, First Reading Emergency Ordinances

**Read in Full and Passed**

### Ord. No. 295-2025

#### Cleveland Public Theatre Student Enrichment Program

**Sponsors:** McCormack, Starr, Griffin, Conwell, Kelly, Maurer,

Spencer

**Summary:** Amends Ordinance No. 115-2025 to authorize an agreement with Cleveland Public Theatre for a student theatre enrichment program funded through casino revenue funds from multiple wards.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified

### Ord. No. 296-2025

#### Cleveland Public Theatre Adult Education Program

**Sponsors:** McCormack, Spencer

**Summary:** Amends Ordinance No. 114-2025 to authorize an agreement with Cleveland Public Theatre for an adult education program funded through casino revenue funds from Wards 3 and 15.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified

### Ord. No. 297-2025

#### Youth Football and Tutoring Program

**Sponsor:** Gray

**Summary:** Amends Ordinance No. 158-2025 to authorize an agreement with Burten, Bell, Carr Development, Inc. for the Reddog Nation Youth Football and Tutoring Program, funded through Ward 4 Casino Revenue Funds.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified

### Ord. No. 308-2025

#### Cleveland City Council Video System Upgrade

**Sponsor:** Griffin

**Summary:** Authorizes a Third Amendment to the agreement with iVideo for the implementation, installation, and maintenance of video production system components for Cleveland City Council, including an extended warranty.

**Funding Amount:** \$27,000

### Ord. No. 313-2025

#### TJ Carrie Heart Warrior Run/Walk Permit Approval

**Sponsor:** McCormack

**Summary:** Approves a permit for the TJ Carrie Heart Warrior Run/Walk event on June 28, managed by Hermes Sports & Events. Establishes safety and street closure guidelines.

**Funding Amount:** Not specified

### March 14, 2025

#### Summary of Ordinance No. 156-2025 (City of Cleveland Budget for Fiscal Year 2025)

**Summary:** An emergency measure to authorize appropriations for the daily operations of all municipal departments of the City of Cleveland for the fiscal year Jan 1, 2025, to Dec 31, 2025.

#### Total 2025 Appropriations:

- General Fund: **\$810,232,856**
- Special Revenue Funds: **\$130,943,302**
- Debt Service Funds: **\$89,637,229**
- Internal Service Funds: **\$185,260,855**
- Enterprise Funds: **\$896,920,772**
- Trust and Agency Funds: **\$14,908,409**

**TOTAL: \$2,127,903,423**

#### Key Department Allocations from the General Fund:

- Public Safety: **\$408.9 million**
- Public Works: **\$67.1 million**
- Parks and Recreation: **\$38.6 million**
- Public Health: **\$16.7 million**
- Community Development: **\$2.9 million**
- Building & Housing: **\$17.4 million**
- Economic Development: **\$3.4 million**
- Legislative Branch (City Council): **\$9.3 million**
- Judicial Branch (Municipal Court): **\$47.8 million**

#### Special Allocations:

##### Additional earmarks include:

- **\$10.2 million to the** Neighborhood Equity Fund (NEF)
- **\$500,000** for the Youth Opportunities Unlimited (YOU) program
- **\$113,000** for “schools as neighborhood resources”
- **\$100,000** for auxiliary police
- **\$650,000** for recreation instructors
- Funding for new liaison positions (e.g., LGBTQ+ liaison **\$92,932**, translation liaison **\$75,000**)
- **\$500,000** for 11 new EMS positions
- **\$49,000** for CO and smoke detectors
- **\$67,500** for a small business mentor protégé

#### Amendments & Adjustments:

The ordinance includes mid-budget changes totaling an additional **\$4,550,230** to the General Fund, reallocated across departments based on updated priorities and needs.

#### Examples include:

- **\$500,000** for YOU contract
- **\$8 million** for NEF transfers
- **\$507,000** reduction in Dept. of Justice contracts
- **\$1.75 million** removal for the Housing Trust Fund

#### Implementation & Oversight:

- Appropriations are based on the Mayor’s Estimate (File No. 156-2025-A).
- Transfers within departments are restricted and must comply with the City Charter
- Unspent 2024 funds are reappropriated to cover prior obligations.

## Ohio Passes Law to Help Drivers Keep Their Licenses



By Staff Writer

A new law, House Bill 29 (H.B. 29), will soon make it easier for Ohio drivers to keep their licenses. Right now, people can lose their driver's licenses for things that don't always involve bad driving, like not paying court fines or child support. This law changes that. It will go into effect on April 9.

The law will help many Ohioans keep their licenses to drive to work, care for their families, and live their daily lives without worry. Here are the most important changes.

### No More Losing Your License for Unpaid Fines

Before, if someone didn't have enough money to pay a small traffic ticket, they could lose their license. That made it harder to work and earn money to pay the fine. Now, the court must offer a payment plan instead of taking away a person's license.

### Parents Can Keep Their Licenses if They're Behind on Child Support

If a parent owes child support, their license could be taken away. What if that parent needs their car for work to earn money? They can now show proof that keeping their license will help them pay child support. Also, the court must give them 30 extra days before taking their license.



State Rep. Darnell T. Brewer (D-Cleveland) celebrated the signing of his House Bill 29 by Governor Mike DeWine on Jan. 9. Brewer joined State Rep. Latyna Humphrey (D-Columbus) as the primary sponsors of the legislation which removes the possibility of driver license suspension as a penalty for various infractions and gives individuals the ability to regain their licenses. Credit: Ohio House Democrats

### Students Won't Lose Their Licenses for Skipping School

Before, students who missed too much school (truancy) could lose their licenses. But this punishment didn't help students stay in school. H.B. 29 removes this rule. If a student already lost their license for truancy, they can apply to get it back.

### Lighter Penalties for Driving Without Insurance

If someone was caught driving without car insurance, they could be punished for up to five years! Now, that time is shortened to just one year.

### Other changes include:

- Giving drivers 45 days (instead of 15 days) to show proof of insurance before their license is taken.
- Ending a \$50 fine for not turning in a suspended license
- Automatically reinstating

licenses for people affected by old insurance rules.

### More Safety Rules for Railroad Crossings

Drivers already stop for trains, but now, they must also stop for maintenance vehicles (big machines that work on the tracks). School bus drivers and truck drivers carrying dangerous materials must also stop and check for oncoming maintenance vehicles.

If a driver doesn't stop, they may take a safety class instead of paying a fine or going to jail.

### Why This Law Matters?

Many people need their car for work, school, or family. In the past, people lost their licenses for reasons not related to dangerous driving. This new law helps fix that problem.

"Taking away someone's license just because they can't afford a fine isn't fair," said a

supporter of the bill. "This new law helps people stay on the road and take care of their responsibilities."

Some people worry that fewer penalties could mean more uninsured drivers. Lawmakers, however, say proof of insurance is still required, and drivers who don't follow the rules will still be penalized.

### What Happens Next?

The new law goes into effect April 9. People with old suspensions for unpaid fines, truancy, or old insurance rules will get their licenses back automatically.

The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles and courts must clear these suspensions by May 9.

This new law means more people will keep their licenses, drive to work, and support their families.

What do you think about H.B. 29? Tell us at [info@cleobserver.com](mailto:info@cleobserver.com)

## Potential Effects of Trump's Executive Orders on Everyday Americans



By Ron Calhoun



Americans voted for change when they elected former President Donald Trump to a second term. Since January, changes have been made by executive order. Many Americans are waiting to see how these new rules affect their lives.

### Immigration and Border Security

The United States now has a national border emergency and an increased military presence along the southern border, which could lead to expanded deportation efforts and stricter enforcement of immigration laws, impacting families and businesses reliant on immigrant labor.

"We have to relate as equals, not subordinates," said Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said, responding critically and emphatically to concerns that the policy could strain U.S.-Mexico relations in an interview with ABC News.

### Economic and Trade Policies

Trump has imposed new tariffs, including a 25% tax on goods from Mexico and Canada and a 10% tariff on imports from China according to The Guardian. These new rules could make phones, cars, and food more expensive. At the same time, American farmers and businesses might have trouble selling their products to other countries because those countries might add their taxes in response.

The president's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), as defined in Executive Order 14158, aims to cut federal spending by restructuring government

agencies (Federal Register) created. While intended to eliminate waste, these cuts have led to federal job losses and delays in Social Security and Medicare services.

Michigan Senator Elissa Slotkin criticized these measures in a Vanity Fair interview. "This is not about efficiency; this is about consolidating power in a way that threatens the very fabric of American democracy," said Slotkin.

### Social and Civil Rights Policies

Another executive order eliminates federal diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs, which could reduce workplace protections, and funding for historically marginalized groups. It is receiving the most pushback from people around the country.

### Energy and Environmental Policies

The government is working



President Donald Trump holds an executive order. Credit: Youtube

to produce more energy in the U.S. by leaving the Paris Climate Agreement and changing rules about oil and gas. Producing more energy in the U.S. might make energy cheaper for now, but it could also cause more pollution and harm the environment in the future.

### Government Accountability and Oversight

Another big rule says that some government agencies must follow

*Continued on page 12*

## Harmonizing: A Guide on How to Attune With Your Child



By Jennifer Bailey, LCSW; LICSW-CP; RDT

Consider this exercise. Take a moment and think of someone you have a very close bond with. Perhaps it's the person you want to call when you first hear good or bad news or who brings you peace. When that person walks into the room, it's like a sigh of relief because "your person" has arrived.

Now that you have a person in mind, please take a moment and think about the specific things that person does that make you feel connected to them. Do they listen to you wholeheartedly? Do they make you laugh when you are feeling bad? That person, that relationship, has a specific component that is necessary in our relationship with our children: Attunement.

### What is Attunement?

In March 2009, Dr. David Arredondo, a psychiatrist and neuropsychopharmacology consultant for adults, adolescents, children, and families serving the San Francisco metropolitan area, gave this definition for attunement from a talk he gave entitled "Attunement and Why it Matters."

"Attunement refers to a deep, genuine, and significant connection with another human. The archetypical model is a mother/father with their infant. This relationship- one of the most remarkable found in all of nature- is the touchstone or gold standard to which attunement is compared," said Arredondo. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/davidarredondo/>

Attunement can be interpersonal harmonization. It means understanding someone else, whether it's how the person feels, thinks, or what they are going through.

When you understand someone, you can recognize and control your feelings, thoughts, and reactions while supporting them. The person you thought of when I asked you to think of someone you feel close to—yes, you are connected, attuned to that person.

Attunement is vital in relationships. It means understanding someone else's feelings or thoughts and adjusting your actions to match. People sometimes confuse it with attachment, but they are different.

### What is attachment?

Attachment describes a relationship and how people respond to each other. It can come from feelings like fear or

stress or support and love. On the other hand, attunement means understanding someone deeply, including their words, actions, and emotions, even when they don't say them out loud.

Attunement is how a relationship is built and stays strong. It takes ongoing learning, listening, and responding to each other. It's a back-and-forth process. Attachment is the result of a relationship, but attunement is something you choose to do on purpose.

For example, two best friends who went to college now live in separate states. They keep in touch via phone calls and text messages. Even though they don't spend much time together, when they can be in the same room, it's as if they were next-door neighbors. That is attunement.

It is like being connected—like when you don't talk to someone

can effectively attune to their child. Let's take a gander at what it would look like for the parent to attune to their child ineffectively.

### What does ineffective attunement look like?

Let's return to the same situation: A parent and baby are at home together. The baby starts crying, showing that it is upset. The parent listens and watches, just like before.

This time, instead of staying calm and trying to understand the baby's needs, the parent becomes upset. Maybe they don't know why the baby is crying, and out of frustration, they start yelling. Instead of helping, this reaction makes things worse. The baby keeps crying, and the parent becomes less able to understand or comfort their child.

### Co-regulation and the role it plays with attunement



for a long time, but when you do, it feels like no time has passed. Understanding and responding to each other (attunement) usually leads to a strong and healthy bond (attachment).

### What does effective attunement look like?

Let's look at the parent-child relationship and how attunement, both good and bad, can affect it. Imagine a parent and their baby at home together. The baby starts crying, showing that it is upset. The parent watches and listens, trying to understand what the baby needs. They decide the baby might be hungry and offer a bottle. The baby drinks and stops crying, feeling comforted. Easy enough?

Let's look closer because it's deeper than the parent feeding the baby. In that situation, the parent manages their own emotions. The parent can understand that the child needs something and chooses a course of action to help soothe the child. Because of this, the child's distress decreases, and the parent's understanding of the child, knowing what the "I'm hungry" cry sounds like, increases. This example is how a parent

These two examples have similar components. In both situations, the parent notices the child's distress. However, in the practical example of attunement, the parent stays calm and in control before responding to the upset child. This is called co-regulation.

This process involves guiding your child in learning to manage their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors by modeling it yourself. In other words, you need to check yourself before you wreck yourself.

When we regulate our emotions first, we can help and support our children better. By using what you know about your child, you develop a deeper understanding of them and intentionally choose your emotions, words, and actions to support their self-regulating ability.

A lack of co-regulation can make attunement difficult. If you don't take a moment to assess your emotional state, you may end up mirroring your child's distress, which can worsen things—just like in the example of ineffective attunement.

### Why attunement and co-regulation are important

Why do we need to attune and co-regulate? What does it accomplish? Deepening your attunement with the practice of co-regulation with your child will positively impact your attachment (relationship) with them. It will allow clearer heads to prevail when faced with a conflict or problem, allowing for opportunities to resolve conflict and create solutions when you are with your child.

Your child will build upon their emotional regulation skills to effectively manage conflict with others, unexpected events, or other situational problems.

Why do we need to attune and co-regulate? What does it accomplish? When you co-regulate with your child, you build a stronger, more connected relationship. It helps create a sense of trust and understanding and will increase your success in navigating challenges together.

When conflicts arise, you can better stay calm and work through them. Over time, your child will learn to manage emotions, handle challenging situations, and interact healthily with others.

As your child strengthens their theory of mind (understanding how others think and feel), metacognition (thinking about their thinking), and self-regulation, they become better at solving problems, forming and maintaining relationships, and deepening their connection with you.

### Takeaways

I know you just read through this whole article. Your brain may be throbbing right now. So here are the main takeaways to carry with you and incorporate when with your child:

- Attunement is the intentional learning and understanding of how another person functions.
- Attachment is the result or outcome of attunement.
- To effectively attune to your child (especially in times of distress), you must first regulate (manage) your emotions before you try to help your child regulate their emotions.
- To practice attunement, spend time with your kid and observe them (e.g., playing with Legos or running around outside when you are doing an activity together).
- Validate your child's emotions.

Jennifer Bailey is a wife, mother of three, and therapist. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and Registered Drama Therapist (RDT).

## Ralph Nader calls Trump's address to Congress 'a Declaration of War Against the American People'



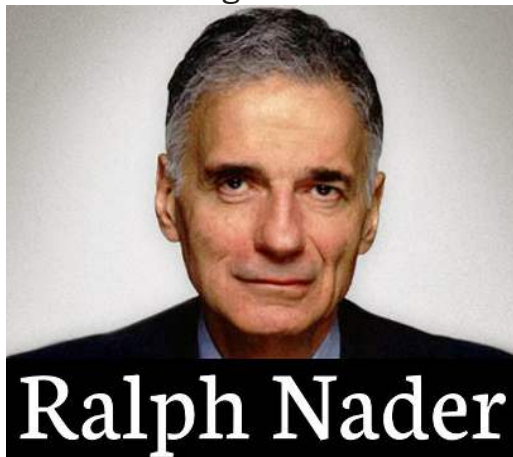
SCAN TO LISTEN

Staff Writer

*Editor's note: This is a summary of an interview available on YouTube provided by Democracy Now! It is an independent global news hour that airs on over 1,500 TV and radio stations Monday through Friday.*

Consumer advocate, corporate critic, and former presidential candidate Ralph Nader has long been a voice for the people, challenging corporate power and government policies that prioritize the wealthy over everyday Americans.

With the upcoming release of his new book, "Let's Start the Revolution: Tools for Displacing the Corporate State and Building a Country That Works for the People," Nader continues to sound the alarm on political and economic issues affecting the nation.



Ralph Nader

Following President Donald Trump's Congressional address, Nader responded forcefully, calling it "a declaration of war against the American people, including Trump's own voters, in favor of the super-rich and giant corporations."

Nader described Trump's speech as riddled with lies, fantasies, and broken promises, calling it a recycled version of his first term. He criticized Trump's economic policies, trade wars, and military escalations, as well as his stance on foreign affairs, particularly regarding China, Russia, and the Middle East.

"He has launched a trade war, an arms race with China and Russia, and is perpetuating even worse policies regarding Palestine," Nader said. He accused Trump of escalating genocidal policies by supporting the forced evacuation of Palestinians from Gaza.

### Warnings of an Expanding Police State

Nader expressed concern over what he sees as the rise of an imperial, militaristic domestic dictatorship, driven by Trump and his allies, including billionaire Elon Musk and Republican leadership. He pointed to Trump's



Photo by DJ Paine on Unsplash

appointments of individuals who support suppressing civil liberties and civil rights, arguing that the administration is moving the U.S. closer to an authoritarian police state.

Nader also raised alarms about Trump's territorial ambitions, referencing his past desire to take control of Greenland, a province of Denmark and a NATO member. He argued that such actions violate NATO agreements and signal a dangerous expansionist mindset.

### Reversing Republican Ideals

A key part of Nader's critique focused on Trump's alignment with Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom he described as a hardcore communist dictator turned kleptocratic oligarch. Nader pointed out the contradiction in Republican support for a leader they historically opposed.

He also criticized Trump's "phony program of government efficiency," claiming that it is actually about dismantling social programs like Social Security and Medicaid to finance tax cuts for corporations and the ultra-wealthy.

### Ignoring Real Government Inefficiencies and Corporate Crime

Nader highlighted that while Trump and his administration push for cuts to essential programs, they ignore massive inefficiencies and corruption within the government.

"They are ignoring corporate crimes that cost Medicare and Medicaid tens of billions of dollars each year. They allow government contractors, particularly in defense spending, to overcharge and exploit taxpayer money," said Nader. "At the same time, Trump is handing out subsidies, bailouts, and giveaways to billionaires like Elon Musk while expanding an already bloated military budget—even beyond what military generals have requested."

According to Nader, Trump and Republican lawmakers are slashing funding for essential services, including:

- Medicaid, which serves over 71 million Americans, including

many Trump voters in red states.

- Social Security, which will open the door for future cuts to Medicare.
- Public safety programs, including food and poultry inspections, auto safety laws, and disaster response efforts.
- Climate and environmental protections, cutting FEMA's disaster response budget and reducing funding for forest rangers, worsening wildfire response efforts.
- Public health initiatives, that will limit resources for the CDC and National Institutes of Health, leaving the country vulnerable to pandemics and epidemics.

"They are leaving Americans defenseless," Nader said. "By gutting these programs and silencing scientists and experts, they are putting public health and safety at serious risk."

### Exploitation of Workers and Contradictory Policies

Nader highlighted Trump's history of exploiting undocumented workers while simultaneously demonizing immigrants who contribute to essential industries like home healthcare, food processing, and construction. He argued that Trump selectively targets individuals rather than addressing industry-wide labor practices.

### Weaponizing Victims for Political Gain

One of Nader's strongest criticisms was Trump's use of crime victims as political props during his address.

"The most disgraceful thing was his use of these unfortunate people as props, holding them up one by one," Nader said, adding that Trump does this to distract from his own contradictory actions.

He noted that while Trump praised law enforcement during the speech, he also pardoned over 600 individuals convicted for their roles in the Jan. 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol, including those who violently assaulted police officers.

Nader's critique underscores the ongoing struggle between corporate and political power and the rights of everyday Americans. As he prepares to release his latest book, he continues to push for systemic change that challenges corporate control, protects civil rights, and restores government accountability to the people.

For more updates and analysis, visit [The Cleveland Observer](https://www.cleobserver.com).

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## Businesswoman Heather Hill Announces Run for Ohio Governor



Staff Writer

Heather Hill, a businesswoman from Appalachian, Ohio, has announced her candidacy for governor in 2026. Hill, a Republican, is focusing her campaign on improving opportunities for all Ohioans, including African American communities.



Republican Heather Hill, a 2026 candidate for Ohio governor, smiles during an interview with The Associated Press in, Ohio, on Jan. 21. Credit: AP Photo/Patrick Aftoora-Osragos

### Who Is Heather Hill?

Hill lives in Morgan County and owns a business that renovates homes for low-income families. She has served as president of the Morgan Local School Board and worked with several state organizations. Her real estate and community leadership background has influenced her platform, emphasizing housing, education, and economic development in underserved areas.

### Why Is She Running?

Hill's decision to enter the race stems from a personal tragedy: two of her foster children were fatally shot by police in separate incidents. Since then, she has worked to improve understanding between law enforcement and individuals with mental health challenges. She believes better communication and community programs can help prevent similar tragedies in the future.

"I know the pain many Ohio families go through, and I want to help," Hill said. "We need leaders who will listen to people, no matter where they come from."

### What Are Her Key Policies?

Hill describes herself as a conservative and supports:

- Small businesses
- Parental rights in education
- Gun rights
- Job training programs
- Increased access to homeownership
- Improved schools in both urban and rural areas

She believes these initiatives can create new opportunities for African Americans, particularly in

cities like Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati, where economic and educational challenges persist.

### How Could Hill Impact Ohio Politics?

According to ABC News, in the 2022 Ohio gubernatorial election, the voter demographics were as follows:

- White voters: 84%
- Black voters: 12%
- Latino voters: 2%

The majority of white voters (67%) supported the Republican candidate, while most Black

voters backed the Democrats, (32%) supported the Republican candidate. Hill's ability to connect with diverse communities will be crucial in the election.

These numbers show that African American voters in Ohio have mostly supported Democrats in past elections as reported by ABC News.

Hill's ideas on better schools, job training, and homeownership could appeal to Black voters, but she will need to connect with these communities and show how her plans can make a difference (ABC News)

### Who Are Her Opponents?

Hill faces a competitive Republican primary against Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost and businessman Vivek Ramaswamy, the latter of whom has received support from President Donald Trump.

While Hill is less known than some opponents, she believes her outsider status is her advantage.

"Ohio needs a leader who knows what people are going through," she said. "I'm not a politician—I'm a mom, a business owner, and someone who cares."

The Ohio gubernatorial election is in 2026, with Republicans aiming to maintain control of the state's executive office.

## Survivors of Suicide Loss Luncheon - Its a Free Event

Support • Healing • Community • Understanding

Losing a loved one to suicide is an unimaginable journey, and no one should have to walk it alone. Removing The Stigma (RTS) invites you to the Survivors of Suicide Loss Luncheon, a compassionate gathering dedicated to fostering healing, connection, and remembrance.

### About Removing The Stigma (RTS)

Removing The Stigma is a nonprofit organization committed to changing the conversation around mental health, suicide prevention, and grief support. RTS provides education, outreach, and resources to individuals and families impacted by mental health challenges, with a mission to break the silence and stigma surrounding these critical issues.

Through community-driven events, advocacy, and direct support services, RTS creates safe spaces where people can openly share their experiences, find guidance, and

begin the journey toward healing.

### About the Event

RTS is holding a free luncheon on April 12 from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Stella Walsh Recreation Center, which is located at 7345 Broadway Ave., Cleveland 44105.

This luncheon is more than a gathering—it is a space of understanding, remembrance, and renewal. Whether you are seeking support, hoping to connect with others who share your experience, or looking for ways to honor a loved one's memory, this event is for you.

The event is a time to reflect, share memories, and connect with others who understand.

Grief counselors will be available throughout the event to provide free, confidential support to anyone in need.

### Join Us

This event is free, but registration is required. Register on Eventbrite at [www.removingthestigma.org](http://www.removingthestigma.org) or Text 216-835-0083 and our team will send you a direct link.



Join us to remember and honor those we've lost and love.

A day of **community, comfort, food, and awareness.** Make a candle to celebrate their life.

## APRIL 12TH

### SATURDAY | 11:00AM - 3:30PM

Stella Walsh Recreation Center  
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FOUNDER & KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**SAMANTHA PEMPTON**  
MISTRESS OF CEREMONY

Contact us for questions or more information  
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Register on eventbrite or [removingthestigma.org](http://removingthestigma.org) to attend for FREE!

## Beware of possible scams when filing tax returns



By Tonya Sams

Have you received strange text messages from someone claiming to be the IRS? Or seen ads for tax preparers making promises that are too good to be true? Beware! Tax season is here, but so is tax scam season. The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland has a few suggestions to help you avoid being a victim of a tax scam.

“The typical scams involve either identity theft or attempts to intercept refunds,” said Patrick Miller, Staff Attorney in Legal Aid’s Economic Justice Practice Group.

“These scams include somebody who’s advertising that they are a tax preparer on social media. For instance, you may be used to getting a certain amount, but they will promise you that they can get you a larger return. The fraudulent tax preparer will prepare the tax return and claim credits that the taxpayer is not entitled to.”

If the IRS catches the errors in the filing, the taxpayer will be audited and must explain why they have claimed credits they are not entitled to. At this point, the refund is gone because the fraudulent tax preparer might have had the refund automatically deposited into their own bank account.

“Scammers may not do anything nefarious with the actual

return itself but use the information that they’re getting from taxpayers to prepare fraudulent returns in the future, beating the real taxpayer to the punch,” said Patrick. “

The IRS is mandated to accept the first filing. The scammer will file the fraudulent return with a taxpayer’s personal information, get the refund and then when the real taxpayer files their actual return, they end up getting rejected by the IRS because there’s already a filed return”, Patrick added.

To avoid being scammed, it’s best to be proactive. One way is to analyze the tax preparer advertisements.

“The way tax law is set up, unless someone’s situation changes, like adding or deleting dependents, or a dramatic change in income, their income tax refund will be relatively consistent year to year,” Patrick said. “It could be a scam if someone is promising they can get you a lot more, that they know special secrets, that they have gotten thousands of dollars more for their clients or if they are promising something they can’t deliver.”

If you receive something and are not convinced that it is from the IRS, you can go to their website. They have samples of all the forms that they send to taxpayers so you can compare what you received with what is on the website.

To avoid being a victim of tax fraud, go to [www.irs.gov/help/tax-scams/recognize-tax-scams-and-fraud](http://www.irs.gov/help/tax-scams/recognize-tax-scams-and-fraud) and [www.irs.gov/help/how-to-know-its-the-irs](http://www.irs.gov/help/how-to-know-its-the-irs).

If you have been a victim

## Did you get a text from the IRS?

It’s a scam.



MESSAGES

now

**IRS**

Hey. DM me your account number so I can withdraw your taxes xoxo

The IRS will never use social media or text messages to contact you. If they want to talk to you, you’ll get a letter in the mail first.

More info on tax scams at [irs.gov](http://irs.gov)

of tax fraud, don’t panic – Legal Aid may be able to help! To apply for assistance, call 888-817-3777, or complete an online intake at [laslev.org/apply](http://laslev.org/apply).

Tonya Sams is a Development and Communications Manager at The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland.



### St. Vincent Society Hunger Centers

Name	Location	Dates
<b>St. John Paul II Ozanam Center</b>	8328 Broadway Ave., Cleveland OH 44105	Saturdays 9:00 AM - Noon
<b>Fr. Michael Wittman Ozanam Center</b>	14305 Shaw Avenue, East Cleveland OH 44112	Saturdays 10 AM - Noon (closed major holidays)
<b>Southwest Ozanam Center</b>	2145 Broadview Rd. Cleveland OH 44109	Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays 10 AM - 1 PM
<b>Fr. Hilbert Ozanam Center</b>	93 Kent St., Akron OH 44305	Saturdays 9:30 AM - Noon (closed on some holiday weekends)
<b>St. Pat’s Hunger Center</b>	3606 Bridge Ave. Cleveland OH 44113	First and Third Wednesdays of the month from 9:30AM - Noon
<b>Community Corner Hunger Center</b>	8300 Detroit Ave. Cleveland OH 44102	Mondays 9:30 AM to 1:00PM and Fridays 9:30 AM to 1:00PM

### Permanent Community Food Centers

<p>15500 South Waterloo Rd, Cleveland OH 44110</p>	<p><b>GREATER CLEVELAND FOOD BANK COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monday/Tuesday/Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.</li> <li>Wednesday: 8:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.</li> <li>Thursday: 8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.</li> <li>2nd and 4th Saturday: 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m, by appointment only</li> </ul>
<p>4415 Euclid Avenue, Suite #100</p>	<p><b>HUNGER NETWORK’S MIDTOWN MARKET</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every Tuesday 1pm-3pm</li> <li>Every Thursday 1pm-3pm</li> <li>Monday March 24th 5-7 pm</li> <li>Saturday April 12th 10am -12 pm</li> </ul>
<p>5115 Broadway Ave. Cleveland, OH 44127</p>	<p><b>UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hunger Center: Tuesday - Friday from 11:30 am - 2:00 pm</li> <li>Community Meal: Every Tuesday at 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm</li> <li>Mobile Pantry Fresh Produce</li> <li>First Monday of the month from 11:00 am - 1:30 pm</li> </ul>

## Federal Appeals Court Hears Pronoun Policy Dispute in Ohio School District



By Julie Carr Smith  
Associated Press

A federal appeals court in Cincinnati heard arguments in early March, in a case that pits an Ohio school district's gender identity policies against the free speech claims of students who believe there are only two genders.

The 2023 lawsuit, filed by Parents Defending Education (PDE), a national nonsectarian membership group, challenges the Olentangy Local School District's policies requiring students to use classmates' preferred pronouns.

The case has drawn national attention, with conservative policy groups, religious liberty organizations, LGBTQ+ advocates, and education groups weighing in on both sides. Ohio Solicitor General Elliot Gaiser joined the oral arguments on behalf of 22 states.

A lower court and a three-judge panel of the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals previously upheld

the district's policies. The full court reconsidered the case in a rare en banc hearing lasting over an hour.

### What Are the Policies?

The district prohibits language deemed offensive or dehumanizing based on gender identity. Its electronic devices policy — applicable both on and off campus — bans transmitting material considered disruptive or harassing on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.

A separate antidiscrimination policy bars discriminatory language under school authority, including slurs or jokes related to characteristics like race, sex, or transgender identity. The code of conduct reinforces these policies.

### Parents Defending Education's Argument

PDE argues that these policies force students to affirm beliefs that contradict their religious views, particularly the idea that gender is fluid.

"These students believe biological sex is immutable," PDE wrote. "They don't want to be forced to affirm that a biologically female classmate is



actually male — or nonbinary."

PDE contends that the policies violate students' First and Fourteenth Amendment rights and punishes them for expressing dissenting beliefs. They also note that the district had not documented prior disruptive behavior before implementing the rules.

"Olentangy's policies aren't helping students by compelling their peers to parrot words they don't really believe," said PDE attorney Cam Norris. "They are harming them by teaching that different worldviews should be silenced, not understood and rebutted."

Gaiser added that the district has taken a side in a political debate. "Schools cannot silence dissenters by labeling them bullies," he said.

### The District's Response

Olentangy, a 24,000-student district near Columbus, says the policies aim to prevent harassment



and support a safe learning environment. It argues PDE wants an exemption for students to harass others based on gender identity.

Attorney Jaime Santos said students remain free to express views on gender identity, so long as they don't direct repeated, intentional misgendering at peers.

"Just because a student can critique the body positivity movement doesn't mean they can call a classmate fat," Santos said.

She added that students are given alternatives, like using a peer's first name or avoiding gendered language altogether — an approach previously upheld by the court.

The court did not indicate when it would rule.

## Potential Effects of Trump's Executive Orders on Everyday Americans Continued from page 7

legal decisions made by the White House. Some people worry this takes away their independence and gives too much power to the president. Another rule changes job protections for government workers, which could make it easier to fire them and make their jobs less secure.

### Public Reaction and Legal Challenges

Many of these orders have already sparked civil rights groups, environmental organizations, and state governments (NPR) lawsuits. Public demonstrations are expected in response to policies affecting immigration, gender rights, and environmental protections.

Republican lawmakers have defended the executive orders, with many urging Congress to codify them into law.

"President Trump is doing what he was elected to do—put America first," said Missouri Senator Josh Hawley as reported by the New York Post.

### How Trump's Executive Orders Could Affect Urban Communities

Trump's recent executive orders could have far-reaching implications for urban communities, particularly in cities like Cleveland:

- 1. Economic Strain from Tariffs and Job Cuts** Higher tariffs could increase the cost of groceries, electronics, and automobiles, disproportionately affecting low-income city residents. Government job cuts could also impact urban communities where public sector jobs are common.
- 2. Changes in Immigration Policy Impacting Workforce & Families** Increased deportation efforts could disrupt immigrant communities and local economies dependent on their labor.
- 3. Rollback of DEI Programs and Civil Rights Protections** Eliminating DEI programs could reduce support for minority-owned businesses and workplace protections in cities with diverse populations.
- 4. Environmental Risks & Public Health Concern** Loosening pollution regulations could increase air and water quality concerns, disproportionately affecting low-income urban neighborhoods.
- 5. Potential for Increased Community Tensions & Legal Challenges** Cities may see increased protests, lawsuits, and civic engagement efforts in response to policies affecting immigration, civil rights, and environmental protections.

TCO will continue to monitor these developments and their impact on the Cleveland community.

Join Us

for a Free Caregiver Luncheon

We will celebrate caregivers by providing lunch, family portraits, caregiver testimonials, and information about free community resources.

The Alzheimer's Association is hosting a free event for caregivers and their loved ones.

Saturday, April 12, 2025

11:30 am - 2:30 pm

Fatima Family Center

6600 Lexington Ave., Cleveland OH 44103

In collaboration with  
Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc.  
Alpha Lambda Sigma Alumnae Chapter

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