

Policy Matters Ohio

Ch-ch-ch-changes - This month, Governor Strickland signed legislation, passed with broad bipartisan support, to limit interest rates that can be charged for short-term loans to 28% APR, down from the 390% that the industry had typically charged. To read some of the research we conducted that helped spark the reform, [click here](#). You may also have read that payday lenders have announced an intent to gather signatures to put a measure on the November ballot repealing the reform – Attorney General Nancy Rogers ruled that [their first stab at ballot language was deceptive](#). Stay tuned.

Accountability Amendment - Policy Matters staff helped add an amendment to the state's economic stimulus plan. The amendment allows the state to set performance and reporting requirements for recipients of assistance under a \$400 million portion of the \$1.57 billion plan. Read Researcher Jon Honeck's [testimony](#) on the issue. Better accountability in state economic development spending? Words to warm a policy wonk's heart...

Collateral damage - As foreclosures continue to spike, one issue that has gotten little attention is the effect on renters. More than a third of Cuyahoga County households rent and they often receive minimal notice if the homes they live in are going to be foreclosed upon. Many lose their security deposits, some have to abandon furniture and appliances, some can't find new housing and need to impose upon relatives, others have to accept steep rent increases because they lack time to shop around. If children are involved, countless other issues emerge. A [new report](#) considers how to reduce financial and social upheaval for what we estimate to be nearly 4,000 renting families in Cuyahoga County who were uprooted by foreclosures in 2007. [Listen to researcher David Rothstein discuss the report on WCPN](#).

Voices behind the numbers - Recent poll results found 71% of Ohioans supporting an effort to allow Ohio employees to earn paid sick days. [Research from last year provides the numbers](#), a report from last month provides the voices. [Paid Sick Days: Voices from Ohio](#) demonstrates poignantly how having sick days helps (one profiled professional used a paid sick day to get a mammogram, worked through treatment of the cancer it revealed, and has been healthy since)... and how not having sick days hurts (we talk to restaurant workers and truck and bus drivers who worked while sick, putting the public at risk, because they could not afford an unpaid day). Read these and other stories to learn how an issue on this November's ballot could help the 2.2 million Ohioans who can't earn paid sick days and the 3.5 million who can't take care of a sick child without losing pay. We're grateful to the Public Welfare Foundation for support of this research series.

Out-of-work fund soon out of money? - During the next year, Ohio's unemployment compensation system is likely to borrow from the federal government in order to pay benefits to jobless workers. [Learn why](#) the UC system is in such poor financial shape and what we should do about it.

To the map - Want to know how many homes had foreclosures filed against them in your Ohio county? [Click here](#) to find out.

Union Advantage - At a time of disappointing wage growth and startling inequality increases, would you be interested in a solution that reduces inequality, raises compensation across the board, significantly increases wages of low-wage workers in particular, and boosts pay and benefits for black workers? Two reports from the Center for Economic and Policy Research – [here](#) and [here](#) – reveal the super-powered shocker that can do all of this.

Capital Gains, Middle-Class Pains - The middle class has not received much benefit from the 2003 reduction of the top U.S. tax rate for capital gains and corporate stock dividends. Instead, according to a [report](#) by Citizens for Tax Justice, the advantage has gone overwhelmingly to the wealthiest Americans. In Ohio, the top 1 percent of taxpayers making an average of \$955,400 a year will gain \$14,298 in 2009.

Meanwhile, the bottom 60 percent of Ohio taxpayers by income will average a gain of just \$20. Less money is coming into the government, meaning program cuts or increases in deficit spending.

The interns are here - We'd like to thank some of the terrific interns and volunteers who've helped us in the past few months – Eden Engel-Rebitzer (Shaker Heights High School and Wesleyan University), Brad Banas, Stephen Cabrera (CWRU), and to welcome the terrific crew that is helping now – Obed Eugene (Howard University), Tim Krueger (Cornell University alum), Brandon Henneman (Cleveland State University), Mike Stanek (University of Chicago), Laura Wichman (Capital University), Alex Hollingsworth (Miami University) and Lea Madry, Mike Newell, and Elizabeth Slife, all from Ohio State University. April Hirsh, our field placement from Case, has been so helpful we're keeping her on for the time being.

Muchas gracias - For support for the reports mentioned in this e-news, the interns who are helping write them, and our work in general, a shout-out to some of our funders: the Public Welfare Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, the Gund Foundation, the Cleveland Foundation, the Sisters of Charity Foundation, the Economic Policy Institute, the New World Foundation, Greater Cleveland Community Shares, the KnowledgeWorks Foundation and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, among others. Want to join this proud list? [Click here](#).

-The Policy Matters team: Amy, Zach, Jon, Pam, David, Kahlil, Amanda, Piet, and April

Just to show that we have literary wonks on staff, along with the policy wonks, a midsummer quote for you: *If we shadows have offended,/ Think but this, and all is mended,/ That you have but slumber'd here/ while these visions did appear./ And this weak and idle theme,/ No more yielding but a dream...*

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