**Advocates Focus on Strengthening Economy, Communities & Families in 2014**

MEDINA- On February 24th Governor John Kasich delivered the State of the State speech in Medina, Ohio, highlighting why jobs and educational opportunities are so important to strengthen Ohio. Advocates for Ohio’s Future agrees that jobs and education are important to strengthen Ohio’s economy, but asserts that more can be done to promote solutions to strengthen families and communities.

In response, Mark Davis, Co-Chair of Advocates for Ohio’s Future states, “We agree that Ohio can be a great place for all Ohioans to live and work. We want to see more discussion about budget and policy priorities that make Ohioans more competitive and increase opportunity for all Ohioans.”

In the State of the State address, Governor Kasich expressed a desire to support Ohioans living in poverty, saying, “I will have much more to say about [poverty] in the coming months.” Advocates for Ohio’s Future looks forward to working with Governor Kasich to lift Ohioans up and out of poverty.

In the past year, Advocates for Ohio’s Future worked alongside the Governor and a coalition of like-minded organizations across Ohio to ensure access to health care for low-income Ohioans. “Governor Kasich confirmed his belief that government has a role in providing public services that strengthen Ohio’s communities and families,” said Col Owns, Co-Chair of Advocates for Ohio’s Future.

Even with the expansion of access to health care in Ohio, families and communities across Ohio still lack essential human resources - things like food, housing, jobs, education, child care, access to treatment, transportation, and child and adult protective services - that they need to prosper and live better lives.

“We want everyone to be able to participate in the community and our economy,” said Will Petrik, State Director with Advocates for Ohio’s Future. “Too many working Ohioans lack adequate income to support themselves and their families.”

Davis concludes, “A strong Ohio depends on strategic investments and commonsense reforms that build strong communities. Public investments in health, human services and early education benefit all Ohioans.”

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*Advocates for Ohio’s Future is a statewide coalition of over 450 local and statewide organizations that promotes health and human service budget and policy solutions so that all Ohioans live better lives.*