

PROGRESSOHIO.ORG

money in politics
a project of Ohio Citizen Action



Coalition on Homelessness
and Housing in Ohio
COHHIO

JUNE 28, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bill Faith, Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO), 614-579-6108, Suzanne Gravette Acker, 614-280-1984; Brian Rothenberg, Progress Ohio, 614-207-3237; Catherine Turcer, Ohio Citizen Action, 614-221-6077; Shaun Tucker, Common Cause/Ohio, 614-917-8551

Advocates Use Humor to Prod Lawmakers on Serious Issues

Humor may have been vehicle, but the message to Ohio lawmakers couldn't have been more serious: Get back to work.

Representatives from Progress Ohio, Ohio Citizen Action, Common Cause/Ohio and the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO) chided the legislature for leaving on vacation before effectively dealing with some of the state's biggest issues, including foreclosure, payday lending, redistricting and anti-discrimination legislation.

They unveiled their "Get back to work" campaign with a spunky video based on the 80's hit tune, "Baby Come Back," and a giant frog in a homemade costume. Advocates wore T-shirts that read, "My lawmaker went to the Statehouse and all I got was this Bullfrog," in reference to HB 393, a bill that passed June 3rd making the Bullfrog the state frog and the Spotted Salamander the state amphibian.

"Nothing against bullfrogs," said Brian Rothenberg, executive director of ProgressOhio, "but there are a few issues more pressing than the state amphibian."

"It's time to get back to the serious issues facing Ohio," said Bill Faith, executive director of COHHIO. "We're in our 15th record-breaking year of foreclosures, and every month the Senate vacations, 8,000 more homes are lost." COHHIO pushes for the passage of HB 486, the payday lending fee limit bill; and HB 3, HB 9 and SB 197, a comprehensive foreclosure prevention package.

"Yes, we're using humor and a touch of embarrassment to get the legislature to come back and do their jobs," added Rothenberg. "The Senate particularly looks bad, after having left without a payday fix, without foreclosure relief and with no simple job protections for LGBT employees who can be fired on a whim."

"They managed to compromise and make the bullfrog the State Frog and the spotted salamander the State Amphibian," said Catherine Turcer from Ohio Citizen Action's

Money in Politics Project. "But what about the gerrymander? We need the legislature to come back and address redistricting reform as soon as possible or it won't be on this November's ballot."

"Having our legislators leave without passing redistricting reform legislation makes the potential for gerrymandering very real and very scary," said Shaun Tucker from Common Cause/Ohio. " We cannot afford to wait another 10 or 20 years for an opportunity to take the map-drawing process out of the hands of the beneficiaries and restore fair, open and competitive elections. Ohio voters deserve better. "

The 128th General Assembly is considered one of the most divisive in recent memory, having passed a total of just over 50 bills, nearly 40 percent of which were passed in May and June of 2010 alone. "You wonder what do we elect representatives for, if they can't compromise on things that matter," said Rothenberg. "Important work has been left hanging for more than a year," added Faith. "It's inexcusable."

-30-

To view the videos, click the links below:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fF3Z1MNgbM>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhZMlr57jsY>

Baby come Back advocate lyrics: "Senate, come back. Any kind of fool can see, the laws you pass say everything about you. House, come back. We need you desperately. I'm a voter and I just can't live without you." Actors: Leontien Kennedy, Audrey Pierce, Catherine Turcer, Tim Steinhelfer, Shaun Tucker, Hannah Yu.