



## tips for phoning your legislators

- Don't forget when you are calling your legislators to BE PROFESSIONAL and COURTEOUS. Legislators and their aides will not respond favorably to callers that complain, whine or are angry.
- STATE the FACTS when you talk to legislators. Use the "Talking Points" sheet and the "What's Happened to the State Services We Love" sheet to help you frame your message. While it is important to stick to facts, it is also important to put a human face on the problem. If you work in an agency that has seen severe cut backs, by all means explain what that looks like in your agency.
- When calling, state your name, where you work and that you live in their district. Ask to speak to your legislator first, however, it is likely that an aide will ask to take a message. Be kind and courteous to the aide and don't feel slighted by not being able to talk to your legislator. Remember, the aide has the ear of the legislator and will relay your message to him or her.

### HERE'S A SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT:

**OCSEA member:** *"Hi, my name is Mark Stevens and I work taking care of people with severe mental illness in the Dept. of Mental Health. I wanted to talk to the Representative/Senator about some concerns I have regarding the budget in that agency."*

**Aide:** (Legislator's name) *is not available at the moment. Can I take a message?*

**OCSEA member:** (FROM TALKING POINTS SHEET) *"Ohio's mental health system has suffered enough from cuts to their safety net through the years. Twelve state mental health hospitals in the 1990s have dwindled down to just seven today, with two last-resort facilities – Twin Valley in Dayton and Cambridge Behavioral Health – having closed in the last year. By closing mental health facilities, the state is depriving families of life-giving mental health services in their communities. We can't afford anymore cuts."*

*Besides..(FROM TALKING POINTS SHEET) OCSEA members have already taken concessions in their contract in a good faith effort to save jobs. In total, nearly \$250 million is being saved thanks to OCSEA members through a combination of contract cuts, that include unpaid days off and cuts in holidays."*

**Aide:** *"I will relay your message."*

**OCSEA Member:** *"Thank you and please make sure the message is relayed to the conference committee members as well."*

