

Put Ohio Families First

by Ian Chamberlin

Strong families have always been the foundation of strong communities. Ohio should be a state where our parents and grandparents can age with dignity, people with disabilities can live with greater independence, and those who sacrifice to care for the people they love can afford to keep doing so.

Every day, Ohioans help an aging parent get dressed, drive a spouse to medical appointments, install a wheelchair ramp or step away from work to care for a relative. These family caregivers rarely ask for recognition. They simply do what families do: show up for one another.

House Bill 279 would establish a state income tax credit for qualified family caregiving expenses. I support the goal of House Bill 279 and believe the General Assembly should move forward with meaningful tax relief for Ohio's family caregivers.

A caregiver tax credit could help families offset expenses such as respite care, adult day services, accessibility improvements, mobility equipment, home care and transportation. Any credit should remain focused on middle- and lower-income households, limited to documented expenses and periodically reviewed to ensure it is helping the families who genuinely need it.

This is not about replacing personal responsibility. It is about recognizing it.

Caring for a loved one can become expensive very quickly. Families often absorb those costs while also paying a mortgage, raising children and managing their own healthcare expenses. They should not be financially punished for helping someone they love to remain safe, independent and close to home.

Supporting caregivers can also help older and disabled Ohioans remain in familiar surroundings rather than entering institutional care before it is truly necessary. That respects individual dignity, strengthens family bonds and can reduce pressure on more costly public services.

I frequently talk about making Ohio a place where young families can build their futures. That matters. But putting Ohio families first means supporting them through every stage of life. It means making Ohio a place where people can raise a family, build a career, care for the people they love and grow older with dignity.

Public policy cannot replace the love that motivates a daughter to care for her father or a husband to care for his wife. It can, however, make that responsibility a little more affordable.

House Bill 279 gives lawmakers an opportunity to do exactly that. I support moving this proposal forward while ensuring the final legislation is fiscally responsible, properly targeted and provides meaningful relief to the Ohio families who need it.

Families are already doing their part. They are making sacrifices, rearranging their lives and opening their homes to care for the people they love. It is time for Ohio to do its part, too.

Supporting family caregivers is compassionate, responsible and long overdue.