



ASSISTANT MINORITY LEADER  
**SHIRLEY SMITH**

21ST DISTRICT

\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Senator Smith Stands Up for Ohioans & Ohio Assets, Votes Against Budget Bill**

*Columbus* – State Senator Shirley Smith (D-Cleveland) today voted against House Bill 153, the biennial operating budget for Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013. Noting that she and her Democrat colleagues tried to improve the legislation by offering amendments on a broad range of topics, Senator Smith said that she could not support a budget that included the sale of state assets, the downsizing of the Office of Ohio Consumers' Counsel, and the unfair preferential treatment for Ohio's wealthiest school districts.

In a speech to her colleagues, Senator Smith singled out the sale of Ohio's prisons, the Ohio Lottery, the Ohio Turnpike, and liquor profits. "We are selling off some of our best assets under the guise of getting the best bang for our buck," she said. Senator Smith questioned why prisons are being sold when a growing body of research shows that there are no clear advantages to privatized prisons. She also noted that prison privatization seemed "contrary to the hard work that's now being done on sentencing reform and the recommendations of the Council of State Governments."

Senator Smith then commented on the budget cuts sustained by the Office of Ohio's Consumers' Counsel. "This organization has saved Ohioans more than \$3 billion dollars by doing the job that it's supposed to do," said Senator Smith. "It has proven to be a great asset for the state. It is effective, and it has saved the citizens tons of money." She continued, "Yet it is being strangled, and robbed of money that protects our people from those who don't want oversight."

Senator Smith also spoke out against H.B. 153's educational funding. "We are now instituting policy that punishes disadvantaged children for their state of hardship, deprivation, and abject conditions," Senator Smith said. "And guess what - all of this is justified in the name of rewarding excellence."

Senator Smith concluded her speech with a request to her fellow senators: "Rather than urge you to vote for this budget or against it, I would suggest you vote in a way that you can sleep at night."

