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By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

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A moral document requires a balanced approach that will raise revenue and ensure that the needs of Ohio's families and vulnerable residents are being met. The Student Government class from John Hay High School came down and participated in the rally after studying about the Governor's budget in class.

Some educators say Ohio Gov. John Kasich's proposal to have public college professors teach more classes would overwhelm instructors and hurt the quality of education. Kasich's 2-year state budget proposal calls for full-time professors to increase their teaching loads by one class every two years.

The group marched from Public Square to the Lausche State Office Building at 615 West Superior Ave., where the Rev. Tony Minor, who led the march and songs, spoke about "not going to let Gov. Kasich turn us around," while marching.

The theme was "Share the Sacrifice." The rally featured speakers who all shared the same view about how the governor is killing jobs and kids' education. Many of the leaders told personal

stories of how they will be impacted by this budget.

"This budget does nothing to share the sacrifice needed during difficult times," said Tim Walters, an ABLE leader. "The governor and the Ohio General Assembly must insist that the businesses and wealthy Ohioans share in the sacrifice by increasing their contributions to the budget," said one protester.

While Ohio is facing an \$8 billion revenue deficit, the state of Ohio will give back \$14 billion in taxes, many to businesses and wealthy Ohioans. "We should also look at closing some of the \$7 billion a year in tax loopholes that go to special interests, said Rev. Minor."

The clergy who spoke touched on comments they made in a letter signed by 60 local clergy members and sent to Gov. Kasich and leadership in the state House and Senate. In the letter it said, "Many of the faith traditions that we represent compel us to assist the vulnerable and the needy and to ensure that all have full access to the goodness of the human experience. We hope that during the budget process, members of Ohio's House of Representatives and Senate step up to right the wrongs in this proposed budget, to show the courage to do what's right. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated: 'The time is always right to do what is right.' To our elected officials – now is the right time to do what's right."

Governor Kasich proposed a two-year budget that would close an \$8 billion gap by cutting aid to cities, reshaping Medicaid, and selling prisons. The budget would cut state aid to municipalities by 25 percent in the first year and another 25 percent in the second. Gov. Kasich said his proposal would help local governments offset their loss of state contributions by erasing the requirement that they pay union wages.

Gov. Kasich's plan would cut \$1.4 billion from Medicaid, the state-federal health care program for the poor. Under the plan, doctors and hospitals would be paid less for treating Medicaid patients. He wants to sell five state prisons for an estimated \$200 million. Privatizing prisons is an extremely contentious issue, as opponents believe it will be a security risk.

The governor also proposed many education changes, including expanding the state voucher program, lifting a cap on the number of charter schools, and easing teacher licensing requirements.

The Advocates for Budget Legislation Equality is an eight year old coalition of human service organizations and low-income groups from across Northern Ohio that works to involve persons directly impacted by the health and human service decisions affecting their lives to have a voice in the budget decisions.