

Forum On Public Jobs Legislation

Proposed state bill would create 5000 public jobs By Ohio surplus revenue

Akron, OH—A public forum on a proposed state bill to create at least 5000 public jobs across Ohio paid for by surplus state revenue will take place Thursday, July 28 at 6 PM at the Laborers' International Hall, 720 Wolf Ledges Parkway in Akron.

All Ohio Representatives and Senators representing any portion of Summit County have been invited to the public forum. The bill's two Ohio House co-sponsors, Mike Foley and Nickie Antonio, have also been invited. Representative Mike Foley has confirmed his participation.

The state bill, HB 271, would create the Ohio Works Progress Administration (WPA) to employ the unemployed to perform work for the public good, improve public property, provide needed public services and provide participants with work experience. The program is based on the depression-era national WPA which employed millions of unskilled workers to carry out needed public works projects.

"We are facing a jobs emergency in Akron, Ohio, and across the country," said George Johnson, President of AFSCME Local 1360, one of the

organizers of the public forum. "The private sector isn't created jobs. A public response is needed. This urgent legislation would provide jobs and income to people to do important public work in our community. That income would then be spent in our community, helping to improve our overall economy."

"Unemployment is near depression-era levels in our state," said Greg Coleridge of the Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee, another of the organizers of the fo-

Continued to Page A4

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Continued from Page A1

rum. "The official Ohio unemployment rate when added to those who would like full-time work, but can only find part-time work, and people who have given up looking for work altogether, the 'U-6' rate, is near 16%. This measure is closer to the way unemployment was measured during the Great Depression. That's higher than 9 of the 12 years from 1929-40. We have a jobs crisis that demands a public and immediate response."

The Tri-County Labor Council, AFSCME Local 1360, Na-

tional Action Network, Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee, United Citizens Coalition and Akron African United Front are sponsors of the public forum.

For more information, contact AFSCME Local 1360 at 330-762-735.