



Wes Retherford

State Representative

**Sponsor Testimony of Representative Wes Retherford
Regarding Ohio Sick Child Care Legislation (House Bill 77)
Before the House Economic Development, Commerce, and Labor Committee
Tuesday, May 9, 2017**

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan and members of the House Economic and Development, Commerce, and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on behalf of House Bill 77.

House Bill 77 is a multifaceted piece of legislation which I believe serves a need that every part of our State has, the need to help families with sick children. This need is something different from the service that hospitals provide as it is not a treatment facility.

Imagine, if you will, a single mother who's trying her best to provide for her child by working as often as she can and many times at inconsistent hours. In some cases this mother is even working two jobs just to get by. Sometimes, as us with children know, that children will catch a cold, flu, or something of that nature. When the child becomes ill the mother is at an impasse. More often than not she is unable to stay home to care for her sick child. She's not able to call off from her job at such a short notice without some penalty, and rarely is she able to bring that sick child to work with her, as it would risk getting others sick.

The child cannot go to school, daycare, or whatever day time program the child would be involved in due to the risk of spreading the illness, the same reason we keep our sick kids home from school. In situations when these single parents have no other family or reliable care taker to turn to they must make the difficult choice of what to do with their child.

Here is where House Bill 530 can help. House Bill 77 will allow ODJFS to issue a license so that these privately funded "sick-child care centers" can operate. A "sick-child care center" would be defined as a place that provides child care, including administering to the needs of school-age children during school hours, for children with short-term illnesses or other medical conditions on a temporary, irregular basis.

The rules governing the centers will reflect the needs of children with short-term illnesses and other temporary medical conditions. These includes ensuring that the physical environment and equipment of the center are safe and sanitary, setting standards for supervision, care, and discipline of the children receiving child care in the center, setting standards for qualifications and screening of staff members, and the ensuring the standards of training and continuing education of staff members.

In the establishing of a sick-child care center, the person, firm, organization, institution, or agency will need to apply for a license to the director of job and family services, including a site plan proposal, the maximum number of children able to be served at one time at the center, the number of adults providing

sick-child care, and any other additional information the director considers necessary in order to be as thorough as possible with the approval process.

To ensure the maximum health and safety for those who will be hosted by the center, the legislation would require a physician as a medical director, certified nurse practitioner, registered nurse or a licensed practical nurse on the premises whenever children are in care, on the premises as well. Also, the maximum number of preschool-age children or school-age children receiving care per staff member would be four to one. Additional safeguards for those in care would include separate rooms for evaluation as well as the facility complying with Strict Infection Control Guidelines to practice isolation precautions for contagious diseases.

It is my belief that House Bill 77 will greatly benefit the lives of many families across Ohio and reduce and eliminate the spread of diseases from the number of sick kids who parents allow them to go to school or daycare, which in turn affects other families. House Bill 77 would be the panacea for parents, employer groups, schools and daycares for sick children when they can't attend school/daycare.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 77.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wes Retherford', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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