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Chairman Manning, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 283. This bill seeks to clarify jurisdictions of probate and juvenile courts in adoption proceedings that involve abuse, neglect, or dependency cases.

As a juvenile defense attorney, I have practiced for over twenty years in this field and have an in-depth understanding of how this process works. When approached about putting forth legislation to correct this issue, I immediately started thinking back to my own experiences with abuse, neglect, or dependency cases. The practice of forum shopping occurs in these cases as a way to try to expedite the adoption process. House Bill 283 seeks to stop the practice of forum shopping in cases where original jurisdiction lies in both probate and juvenile courts.

Unlike what some opponents have said, this bill will not slow down adoptions, limit adoptions, or even stop adoptions. This piece of legislation would set up a process that would allow for probate courts to exercise jurisdiction over these abuse, neglect, or dependency cases provided that they have received written consent from the juvenile court judge who was presiding over that case. If the juvenile judge deems that the jurisdiction is better suited in probate court, they can provide written consent to allow for that to occur. If not, the case will be heard in the court that the original motion was filed until a ruling has been made.

House Bill 283 has support from the Ohio Judicial Conference and the Public Children Services Association of Ohio. I look forward to working with the committee to make any changes that would improve upon this bill. At this time, I would be happy to answer any questions that the committee may have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

OHIO'S 43RD HOUSE DISTRICT

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