



Ohio Family Care Association

"The Voice of Ohio Resource Families"

**Ohio House of Representatives Community and Family Advancement Committee
House Bill 283 - Proponent Testimony
October 17, 2017**

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Rezabek, Ranking Member Celebrezze, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, my name is Wendi Turner and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Family Care Association (OFCA), an Ohio non-profit organization that serves and strengthens families caring for Ohio's most vulnerable children.

OFCA brings together Ohio resource families (adoptive, foster, kinship, and respite), birth or primary families, child-caring agency personnel, and interested others to promote the best interests of children, youth, and families who have been touched by Ohio's child welfare and other child-serving systems.

OFCA uniquely understands the dynamics specific to each family structure and believes that inclusion of the family voice in legislative decision-making supports positive systemic change and, ultimately, better outcomes for families and children. OFCA appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Ohio House Bill 283, which will provide a process for coordination between juvenile and probate courts as decisions about adoptive placements are made in order to avoid compromising the stability and well-being of children who are under the juvenile court's jurisdiction.

As we understand this legislation, it simply requires the juvenile court's written consent to the adoption of a child under its jurisdiction before a probate court can exercise jurisdiction over the adoption petition. This short bill can make a big difference to a child who is caught in the middle of a battle between competing courts and competing placements, such as that involved in the case on which this legislation is based. Our membership includes families who have been involved in such conflicts. They know first-hand the trauma impact and uncertainty these cases cause to children who may already have suffered the loss and trauma of out-of-home placements.

OFCA believes that this legislation, rather than preventing or delaying adoption, will provide a clear process for cases in which a juvenile court determines that an adoptive placement is the best disposition for a child in the temporary custody or protective supervision of a children services agency. OFCA represents the interests of key participants in such proceedings, including resource caregivers and primary parents. This

legislation is not biased toward either group; rather, it is aimed at making the process fairer for all involved. Most importantly, we believe that the process proposed in House Bill 283 supports the stability and well-being of children involved in Ohio's child welfare system by making it less likely they will be caught in the middle of a jurisdictional dispute.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendi Turner, Executive Director
Ohio Family Care Association
303 East Broad Street
Columbus OH 43215
office@ofcaonline.org
614-222-2712