

Committee Assignments:

Finance
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Higher Education and Workforce Development
State and Local Government
Public Utilities



Commissions/Special Committees:

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BRAC and Military Affairs Task Force – Chair
Ohio Aerospace and Aviation Technology Committee
Ohio Third Frontier Commission Advisory Board
Joint Committee on College Affordability
Ohio Latino Affairs Commission

State Representative Rick Perales

Ohio's 73rd House District: Western Portion of Greene County

Government Accountability and Oversight Committee

House Bill 612 – Jacob's Law

Sponsor Testimony

June 20, 2018

Chair Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of House Bill 612, Jacob's Law, to create a registry, similar to the sex offender registry, that would include the basic information on individuals who have been convicted of crimes against children.

Many of you might have notice this bracelet I have worn for two years. It reads "Justice for Jacob", "In loving memory of Jacob Alan Barker". Jacob left us far too soon. I stand before you today in the interest of telling you Jacob Barker's story, in the hopes that we can create a law that prevents any more of these stories from being written in Ohio's history. No more children should have to suffer at the hands of child abusers, when there are clear steps we can take to prevent such tragedies.

Jacob Barker was a vibrant two-year-old boy. His family was unaware that his birth mother had entered into a relationship with a convicted child abuser. This man had previously been convicted for endangering an 8-week-old baby after he fractured her skull and broke her ribs and ankle. He served a mere two and a half year sentence before being released and meeting Jacob's mother. Jacob's mother left her young son in the assailant's care, where Jacob was abused. Jacob died from blunt force trauma, with injuries to his head, neck, and torso.

Far too often, children face death at the hands of child abusers that have been entrusted to care for them. What makes Jacob's death especially tragic is that his murderer was not a first-time offender. The first offense was a huge red flag. Had the registry been created, it might have been easier for Jacob's family to be aware of the danger that was introduced into their family dynamic.

It should not take a second offense, and a second tragedy, to eliminate the opportunity for people like Jacob's murderer to harm more children. This legislation would create a child endangerment registry, similar to the sex offender registry, to allow an easy and streamlined avenue for families to look-up individuals that may come into contact with their children. An important provision of this bill is that it creates the framework for this registry, with no action being taken until funding can be identified by either the Attorney General's Office or appropriated by the General Assembly. Although this bill doesn't immediately create the registry, it provides the

foundation so once funding is appropriated, the process can move quickly to help keep children like Jacob safe.

Jacob's family, who are here with us today, have been instrumental in the creation of this bill and I would like to offer my sincerest gratitude to Tammy Barker and the rest of the family. Their efforts to turn this unimaginable tragedy into a positive endeavor so that other families will never go through the pain and suffering they experienced should be recognized.

Chair Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Jacob's Law, and stand ready to answer any of your questions.