



**Ohio House Finance Committee
Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
House Bill 49 Testimony
Ohio Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs
March 22, 2017**

My name is Alexis Lester, and I am a member of the South Side Boys & Girls Club. I am the oldest of 8 sisters, and have lived on the South Side for my entire life. I started coming to the club in 2014 when the pilot location was opened in a small storefront on Parsons avenue. I was one of the first 5 members to join.

When I first started attending the club, my attitude was horrible. I had major behavior problems in school and was suspended multiple times. I was known for being the fighter, and the one who had no fear of authority. Eventually, those walls began to break down. I was attending the club every single day and had conversations with club staff, enrolled in club programs, and got to join the club Volleyball team. I felt like I had purpose, and that my behavior can change. I have never had a behavior issue within the club, and am one of the top attending members, when in school, I had issues with truancy.

Here I am today. I am a member of the club's leadership program "Keystone" which focuses on community service and fundraising. I am also a member of the junior staff, and again on the volleyball team. The club has taught me that I have purpose in life, I can work alongside people without conflict, and I can be a leader for positivity instead of seeking negative attention. I am the prime example of how the Boys & Girls Club can change lives.

Thank you for supporting kids like me throughout Ohio. I don't know what I would do without the Club. I hope you will continue to support me and other kids like me. We need you.

Alexis Lester
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