

House Bill 156 Testimony

Good morning Chairman Brinkman, Vice Chairman Henne, Ranking Member Bocchieri, and members of the House Insurance Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to House Bill 156.

My name is Brandi Slaughter and I am the CEO for Voice's For Ohio's Children. Voices for Ohio's Children is a nonpartisan coalition that advocates on behalf of the children in our state. Ohio is the home of more than 2.6 million kids and, at Voices, we strive to give all of them a voice in the public policy process. Because, while priorities and issues change from one General Assembly to another and from this budget cycle to the next, children's needs remain the same. They need a loving family and support system, nourishing meals, access to high-quality healthcare, safe neighborhoods, quality schools, engaging community activities, and a variety of college and career options.

Ohio's children are our future, and each child deserves accessible and quality care that can provide them with a higher quality of life. House Bill 156 hinders this mission by taking steps to prevent health insurance providers from working with vision care providers to engage in routine vision care services. As a result of House Bill 156, Ohio families would see an increase in out of pocket cost for routine vision care services, an unexpected expense that many Ohio families are not financially able to bear.

This bill also limits the use of suppliers to control costs for consumers, even if the benefits are fully covered. Ohio families will see their optometry prices increase. Additionally, this legislation would treat vision plan networks differently than any other specialty network.

Vision care services are critical services for Ohio's children. Students with vision problems may not maximize their learning potential if vision issues are not discovered or corrected, and routine vision care is critical in helping these students succeed at their highest capability. Limiting Ohio families' access to vision care services through increasing out of pocket costs has negative implications for Ohio's children going forward.

On behalf of the children in the state of Ohio, we urge you to oppose House Bill 156.

safe

healthy

educated

connected

employable

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