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Child Support Enforcement Agency
Susan A. Brown, Director

Senate Judiciary Committee

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Proponent Testimony of Susan A. Brown, Esq.

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SB 70

Good afternoon Chairman Bacon, Vice-Chair Dolan, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. My name is Susan Brown, and I am the Director of the Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA), where I oversee 268 employees who manage a caseload of over 71,000 and collections of over \$167 million dollars per year in child support payments. I have been in the child support program since 1997, and I have been the Director of four county CSEAs over the span of my career: Lawrence, Athens, Delaware, and Franklin. I am a Commissioner on the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood and I am a Past President of the Ohio CSEA Directors' Association (OCDA). I currently chair the statewide OCDA Child Support Works Committee, a group committed to improve parent workforce services within the child support program. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to present proponent testimony on Senate Bill 70.

In a Metro County such as Franklin, we rely heavily on our strong administrative processes to provide efficient, cost-free services to families, as it can take 6 or more months to get a hearing scheduled before our courts, while we can process an order administratively within 3 months. In 2016, we had six administrative hearing officers that held approximately 2,864 administrative hearings during the year, and our Agency issued upwards of 9,154 administrative orders for establishment of paternity and support, modification of support, and termination of support.

In my time in the program, however, I have seen the inconsistencies that exist county to county, and each county I have overseen has done things differently. Some of this is to be expected, given the judicial component of our program, but other discrepancies have been caused by loopholes in our statutes, such as our inability to establish an administrative order for a mother to pay child support, and other inconsistencies, such as the varying effective dates of administrative child support orders and the ability to begin the termination process prior to the event occurring, instead of after.

SB 70 will make timely and necessary changes to fine-tune our administrative processes, standardize appeal timeframes, and improve consistency statewide. These "technical tweaks" will also improve our efficiency and effectiveness in providing services to families.

SB 70 is a noncontroversial adjustment to our administrative processes – updating and streamlining the program to better assist the families we serve. The bill was passed by the Senate unanimously in the 131st General Assembly and then passed out of committee unanimously in the House as SB 308, and I again ask for your support in passing it out of committee and on to the Senate floor in this General Assembly.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am happy to answer any questions.
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