



Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association

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Joel Potts, Executive Director

**Ohio Senate Judiciary Committee
Testimony on Senate Bill 70
Joel Potts, Executive Director
Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association
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Chairman Bacon, Vice-Chairman Dolan, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as a proponent on Senate Bill 70.

My name is Joel Potts and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association. We represent Ohio's 88 county departments of job and family services, of which sixty-seven of these entities also serve as the local child support enforcement agency.

Ohio's child support program is a national model, collecting \$8.25 for every dollar invested: thirty-three percent above the national average. Investments in this program are extremely cost effective, lift children out of poverty, reduces dependency on public assistance programs and supports families. Families receiving welfare benefits will leave the program almost twice as fast as cases where no child support order is established or collections are made. There are over one-million children in Ohio needing support and local child support enforcement agencies successfully collect nearly \$2 billion a year for these families.

Despite our best efforts, the program may often be very bureaucratic, complex, costly and time consuming to all the parties involved. To address some of these challenges, there are many things that may be achieved through administrative processes rather than through the courts. A statewide Shareholders' Reform Group was formed to make recommendations on ways to improve our program, including reviewing our administrative process. The group consisted of legislators, judges, magistrates, the state department of job and family services, county child support agency representatives and parent groups. Many of the recommendations of the work group have been implemented where authority existed to do so, others require statutory changes.

Senate Bill 70 includes the administrative process changes included in the Shareholder Reform Group recommendations. These changes are identical to those included in Senate Bill 308 from last year. SB 308 passed the full Senate and House Committee unanimously but failed to get to the House Floor for a final vote before the end of the 131st General Assembly.

This bill would do much to enhance Ohio's child support program. The proposed changes in the bill would streamline the administrative process, reduce the number of cases requiring court hearings, speed up collections and resolve many disputes quicker. This bill would also provide more consistency to the program, especially in cases involving multiple jurisdictions.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you again for the opportunity to speak as a proponent of Senate Bill 70. I would be happy to answer any questions and look forward to working with you to finalize legislation which meets the needs of the citizens we serve.