

**eliminating racism
empowering women**

ywca

canton

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF **Cathy Mick-Jennings**
OHIO COUNCIL OF YWCAs
BEFORE THE OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FINANCE COMMITTEE, CHAIRMAN SCOTT OESLAEGER
Sub.H.B.166
MAY 6th, 2019

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chairman Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee, I am Cathy Mick-Jennings, Executive Director of the YWCA **Canton** and a member of the Ohio Council of YWCAs. Our Council is made up of the 14 YWCA chapters across the State, and we are committed to our goals of eliminating racism and empowering women.

I am here to provide proponent testimony in favor of an amendment to Sub.H.B. 166, which will be sponsored by Representative Romanchuk that earmarks \$1.4 million to support specific programming in YWCA chapters that provide direct services to women and children victimized by gender-based violence throughout the State, and to continue and expand community outreach through youth development and prevention programs. More specifically, the amendment would support Council programs that:

- Prevent domestic violence,
- Support victims of domestic violence,
- Provide trauma-informed services for survivors of domestic violence, and
- Support outreach and development opportunities youth development programming.

These services would include emergency shelters, crisis hotline support and non-residential services. We provide wraparound services that address gender-based violence, including trauma-informed support for survivors such as counseling, case management, substance abuse services and prevention education in the community.

Our member organizations reached more than 90,000 women, girls and family members last year through our programming. Our current sources of funding – Federal or private – are insufficient to meet ongoing needs of the communities and vulnerable populations we serve. The requested funds will increase our ability to serve more individuals in need, improve program quality and increase the impact of those we serve.

Each year, demand for the services we provide grows, as our programming is much vaster than the two areas for which we are seeking funding.

Our major programs include subject matters that address human trafficking and gender violence prevention, as well as Women and Girls' empowerment, economic development, leadership, family development (including teen family development), health and wellness, senior community service, and racial justice and civil rights. A significant percentage of people we serve are people of color and individuals living in poverty.

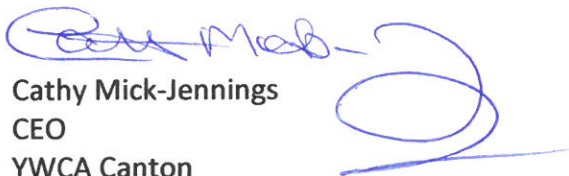
Our programs are curriculum based and outcome-centered, and we sustain active service partnerships and referral channels throughout our respective communities. Finally, we provide a variety of educational opportunities for youth as part of wraparound services.

The YWCA Canton houses the largest homeless in Stark County for women, children and families. In 2018 the YWCA Canton homeless shelter proved 18,355 nights of service to over 300 adults and 100 children. Ninety (90) of these individuals served through our shelter had experienced 3 or more incidents of trauma in their adult life. Many of these individuals were never identified as having experienced trauma until their stay at our shelter. Their unstable lifestyle has now been directly tied to the trauma that they suffered and never receiving treatment for this. Many of them have begun their treatment journey, but every year we see the number of adults and children who have suffered trauma only increase.

The requested funds would be a line-item appropriation in TANF Block Grant funding, which will not cost the state any General Revenue Funds as it is an allocation of federal pass-through dollars.

The Governor's proposed budget requested substantial resources be devoted to areas in social services to protect the most vulnerable Ohioans in H.B.166, and the substitute bill can be improved with a commitment to support programming in organizations such as ours that are also on the front lines to address those we serve. We believe our funding request is consistent with that priority.

Chairman Oelslager, we urge the Committee to favorably consider the amendment request. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Chairman Oelslager, it has been a while since your last visit to our facility in downtown Canton. I would be honored to meet with you and give you a tour and explain first hand our need for these expanded services.



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