

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF GLORIA WHITELEY-MAGRATH
OHIO COUNCIL OF YWCAs
BEFORE THE OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FINANCE COMMITTEE, CHAIRMAN SCOTT OESLAEGER
Sub.H.B.166
MAY 5, 2019

Chairman Oeslaeger, Vice Chairman Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee, I am Gloria Whiteley-Magrath, Executive Director of the YWCA of Alliance, and a member of the Ohio Council of YWCAs. Fourteen local YWCA associations comprise the Council, all united under one mission, to eliminate racism and empower 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 directly provide services to women and girls who experience gender-based violence; and ensure that children, youth, and families have the support of high quality programs during non-school hours to support academic and lifelong success. 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 for youth

State-wide these services would include housing, crisis hotlines, counseling, case management, and prevention education, and youth development opportunities that promote conflict resolution, decision-making, efficacy, leadership, and academic success.

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Council records indicate that across the state YWCAs served more than 90,000 women, girls, and family members last year through our programming. A significant percentage of them are people of color and individuals living in poverty. Current sources of funding are not enough as we work to meet increasing local demand for services and to secure optimal outcomes for participants.

In Alliance, our YWCA provides low-cost transitional housing. Women can stay up to two years. In addition to safe, affordable housing, women work with a coach to overcome barriers and move toward greater personal and financial stability. The Closet, which began as an outreach of the Alliance Chamber of Commerce Women's Division, is open to residents and the public providing job-related clothing and accessories. In conjunction with the City of Alliance, we offer an employment assistance service that helps women overcome barriers, such as lack of transportation, uniforms, or steel-toed shoes. 100% of the women assisted last year indicated, the assistance made it possible for them to earn a paycheck.

For over ten years, the YWCA Alliance has been the lead partner in Synergy Alliance, a collaborative of local youth service providers. Together we operate the Navigators after school program at Alliance Middle School. This school year, our District requested that we operate the Academic and Athlete Study Tables for students that are failing one or more classes. We just learned from the Dean of Students that during the winter term "as a result of attending" 71.4% of the students raised their grades. Summer Explorers, an eight-week program for children in grades 2-5, is about to enter its fifth year. The program is designed to help eliminate the summer slide. Research indicates more than half of the achievement gap between lower and middle-income youth is connected to unequal access to summer learning opportunities with low-income students losing more than two months reading achievement during the summer break. It further states that quality programs can prevent the

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slide. Locally 100% of our regularly attending students saw growth in reading fluency and math computation using district tests.

Our YWCA, like others in our Council, seeks to utilize best-practice and researched-based strategies; aligns with service partners to optimize impact; and refers to community resources in order to achieve long-lasting outcomes for women, children, and youth.

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. Funds allocated to the Council provide the opportunity to directly impact on the lives of Ohio's women and children. I believe that this request aligns with the Governor's commitment to support programming and direct services for the most vulnerable Ohioans.

Chairman Oeslager, we urge the Committee to favorably consider the amendment request. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.