

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SHANNON ISOM
OHIO COUNCIL OF YWCAs
BEFORE THE OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FINANCE COMMITTEE, CHAIRMAN SCOTT OELSLAGER
Sub.H.B.166
MAY 6, 2019

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chairman Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee, I am Shannon Isom, President and CEO of YWCA Dayton and the President 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 mission of eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

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 in 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'



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empowerment, economic development, leadership, family development (including teen family development), health and wellness, senior community service, and racial justice and civil rights.

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.

Founded in 1870, YWCA Dayton is the oldest social services agency serving women in Montgomery and Preble, Ohio, counties. YWCA Dayton lives its mission through four core service areas: operating the only domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers in Montgomery and Preble counties, along with the region's longest-running 24/7 crisis hotline; providing affordable housing and wraparound life skills services for women and families who are survivors of domestic violence or at risk of homelessness; empowering girls to explore and achieve their highest potential through our signature Girls LEAD! leadership development program; and advocating for legislative and public policy priorities that promotes racial and social justice equity.

In 2018, YWCA Dayton's domestic violence services sheltered nearly 200 women and children; provided more than 12,000 nights of stay in shelter; answered more than 8,000 crisis calls; and provided more than 15,000 hours of advocacy, counseling, and crisis support. 85% of the people served by YWCA Dayton have incomes below the poverty level, and 31% are people of color.

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.



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