



Sponsor Testimony

State Representative Brian Baldrige

House Bill 14

Chairman Merrin, Vice-Chair Manning, and members of the Ohio House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to stand before you today to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 14. House Bill 14 builds upon the strategic priority that Governor DeWine wants to focus on for a more prosperous future for all Ohioans. All of us in this room today recognize that we need to do all that we can as stewards of the public trust to protect our children. This piece of legislation today is designed to assist Ohio's most vulnerable population.

My joint-sponsor Representative Boyd has done a great job at explaining the mechanics and specific policy points of this bill, I would like to take some time to express the positive effect this will have on our local communities. This bill takes a regional approach to efficient and effective government. The regional approach to this bill allows our counties to have a kinship care navigator that is aware and responsive to the specific needs of our communities.

In House District 90, we have entire families that are impacted by addiction, and potential caregivers who are ready and willing to assist but do not know how to start. We have people who are positive role models within our communities, are ready and willing to act to help, but are not included under Ohio's current definition of kinship caregiver. House Bill 14 is a responsive and responsible legislative piece that forges a strong partnership between state, county, and the local government to make sure we are all on the same page when it comes to providing a stable and nurturing environment for our children to grow and live in.

House Bill 14 sends a strong message to our constituents that we as a legislature are placing a priority on having strong families in every community across this great state. By providing a system that operates according to regional needs, ensuring funding this navigator system is not placed on the backs of our local communities, and allowing caregivers access to similar resources as foster parents, we are building a stronger Ohio.

Chairman Merrin, Vice-Chair Manning, and members of the Ohio House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to stand before you today. Representative Boyd and I stand ready to answer questions from committee.