

Proponent Testimony
HB 206
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Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Rogers and members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to offer this written testimony in support of House Bill 206, sponsored by Representatives Stolfus and Boyd. As you are aware, HB 206 would increase the Ohio adoption tax credit to \$10,000 and make it a refundable credit.

As an organization that advocates for sound adoption policies, we wholeheartedly support this bill. We have first-hand experience working with families who are seeking to adopt, but find the cost to be daunting, and in some cases prohibitive. HB 206 will create meaningful support to families who are looking to adopt out of both the public and private systems.

As has been noted in previous testimony, private adoptions often bring higher up-front costs as attorney and agencies fees can be substantial. While public, or foster care adoptions, do not have the same up-front expenses, these adoptions still carry substantial costs that are often not associated with private adoptions. Notably, children adopted out of the foster care system have often experienced trauma. They are often older than children adopted through the private systems, so they may have experienced trauma over several years. As a result, they frequently need long-term counseling and therapy. Those costs are borne by the adopting family and are certainly a factor that prospective families consider.

Finally, it is worth noting that this bill should actually help the state financially. While children remain in foster care, the state pays foster parents a daily per diem. Once these children have been adopted into permanent homes, the state is no longer obligated to pay the per diem and any adoption subsidy paid is typically substantially lower. Furthermore, studies have shown that children who are adopted into permanent, loving homes are significantly less likely to be involved in crime, become pregnant as a teen, or face addiction issues. Thus, they are less likely to become incarcerated, use the Medicaid system, or the public mental health system, all of which require state funds.

In conclusion, HB 206 creates a win-win for prospective adoptive families and the state of Ohio. By incentivizing adoptions, children can find permanence and the state can recoup the investment it is making through the tax credit.