

Chairman Beagle, Vice-Chair Williams and members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee Workforce Subcommittee. I am Sara Lewellen and I am currently the Vice-Chair of the Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services (OCAPS), the oldest standing Ohio Coalition in existence. I am also the Supervisor of the Social Services Unit at the Pike County Department of Job & Family Services, which is responsible for the provision of Adult Protective Services to Pike County's residents.

I am here today to testify on behalf of the Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services. OCAPS is a statewide coalition developed to enhance the provision of service by collaboration, education and advocacy for older adults who are victims or at risk of becoming victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation. OCAPS has been in existence for 40 years and has members all across the State of Ohio, representing agencies and organization of numerous disciplines that are dedicated to the protection of Ohio's aging population.

I want to thank each of you for working with and allowing professionals and interested parties to participate on the APS Funding Workgroup. I also want to thank you for the funding that has been provided to the State and the counties for planning, expansion and innovation. The opportunity to develop and improve our APS services by using the funding that has been made available was much needed and greatly appreciated. I am also extremely excited about the training opportunities that are now available for workers. Consistent training makes for consistent services, making for higher quality services and lending validity to statistics and data. The training is much needed and very much appreciated.

As Senators who speak to their constituents and are familiar with the demographics of your respective districts, you don't need me to tell you all about our aging population, the rise

of the baby-boomers, or silver tsunamis. These factors are common knowledge and common sense. Each of you probably know from professional and personal experiences that keeping a loved one at home is much less expensive than placing him or her into a long-term care facility, and you most likely already know that the services APS provides help keep our elderly in independent community living arrangements, and are aware that sometimes it takes spending a little money in order to save a lot.

I have been the APS Supervisor for 9 years now. My Unit used to receive less than 50 APS referrals a year. We would receive hundreds of Applications for Subsidized Child Care each year, but things are changing. In 2013, Pike County only received 9 more child care applications than we did APS referrals. In 2014, there were only 5 more. In 2015, Pike County, Ohio has received thus far, 12 more APS referrals than we have Child Care Applications. While on a much smaller scale than metro counties, this represents almost 30% more APS referrals than Child Care Applications and the need for Child Care services are significant and well-known! It is projected that statewide APS referrals will top 105,000 this year with only 1 in 8 victims actually being referred! The dynamics are shifting more and more rapidly.

OCAPS has always campaigned to have at least one full-time APS worker in each of the 88 counties. We have requested and pursued the securing of funding to make this happen. We now, thanks to the recent funding allotment, have come closer than we have ever been to meeting that goal. Pike County will receive \$30,000 from the APS line item. This is terrific and we applaud our lawmakers for including APS in the budget. However, even in a county as small as Pike, this still falls short of the funding needed to provide effective services to our senior residents. While \$30,000 may meet a significant portion of the expense of one worker, there is

little left over to provide direct services to our clients in need, or we may opt to use the funding to provide services but have no one who can go into homes, make assessments, and determine exactly what the services needed are. We are trapped between having a worker who sees that services are needed but cannot be provided, and having some funding for services but no staff to provide, facilitate or arrange for those services to be delivered.

On behalf of OCAPS and county APS workers all across Ohio, and definitely on behalf of Ohio's senior population, I respectfully request that you consider increasing the funding level for the Adult Protective Services Program. OCAPS has collectively determined that increasing the line item to \$20 million dollars would go a long way in allowing for each county to have at least one full-time worker and be able to provide some services. I personally acknowledge that any increase in funding would be welcomed and your consideration of APS in the future will be greatly appreciated.

I am happy to entertain any questions at this time or each and all of you are welcome to contact me at any time. My email is Sara.Lewellen@ifs.ohio.gov and my phone numbers are 740-947-2171 ext. 8823 (work) or 740-577-2644 (cell).