



Safe Children, Stable Families, Supportive Communities

House Community and Family Advancement Committee

Proponent Testimony on HB523

May 16, 2018

Mary Wachtel, Director of Public Policy

Public Children Services Association of Ohio

37 W. Broad Street, Suite 1100

Columbus, OH 43215

mary@pcsao.org

614.224.5802

The Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) is writing in support of HB523. PCSAO is a membership driven association of Ohio's county Public Children Services Agencies (PCSAs) that advocates for and promotes child protection program excellence and sound public policy for safe children, stable families and supportive communities.

We appreciate that Rep. Lanese and Rep. Perales have brought forward this legislation. Public children services agencies support the bill because it essentially codifies current practice of many of those agencies. Requiring cross-reporting of abuse between social services professionals and law enforcement/animal control officer (or equivalent) is good practice because of the documented link between child abuse/domestic violence and animal abuse.

Likewise, notifying the Department of Defense Family Advocacy Program when a person serving in the armed forces is under investigation for child abuse or neglect is also good practice. This "cross-referral" process is already required for systems at the state and local levels including developmental disabilities, mental health and addiction, youth services/juvenile court, education, and job and family services. PCSAs who currently notify the Family Advocacy Program report a positive experience and helpful partnership in helping families struggling with child abuse and neglect.

For these reasons, we request your support for HB523. Thank you.