



House Bill 420 Sponsor Testimony
Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
December 4, 2018
Representative Janine Boyd
9th House District

Good afternoon Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares and esteemed Senators of the Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee. It's my honor to share my testimony with you today as joint sponsor of HB 420 with Representative Emilia Sykes. Indeed, it's always a privilege for me to talk about policy opportunities for our body to consider, in terms of children. All children. But, especially children anxiously longing for families, families earnestly praying to have children, the resources available or not yet available to them, and how we might better support them all.

We in the legislature have passed a wide range of "awareness month" bills. We do that, I believe, at least in part, to engage the public on a subject matter that is worthy of their attention. With "awareness month" legislation, there's opportunity for advocacy organizations and related programs to increase their outreach activities. In the case of adoption awareness, I know from personal and professional experience, it's an opportunity to recruit willing foster-to-adopt families; highlight our kinship caregiver

families who are heroes in the shadows of family crisis; educate families who might be unsure about adoption; and even engage legislative bodies on initiatives that might address the growing waiting child crisis in our state. Yes, it is a crisis. According to our Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, there are nearly 16,000 children in foster care on any given day. There are 2,500 children in Ohio's foster care system in Cuyahoga County along, all currently eligible for adoption. That does not include the children whose families are in addiction crisis, and who are entering the system daily. Public Children Services Association of Ohio reports that if the opioid epidemic continues at its current pace, Ohio will have over 20,000 children in foster care by 2020. And the number of available foster homes are not increasing at the same pace.

Given these reasons and so many others, it is fitting and timely that we bring before the House committee on Community and Family Advancement, a bill that creates Adoption Awareness month in the our state.

Thank you kindly, for your attention and support. I'm happy to take any questions from the committee.