Proponent Testimony

HB 420

Adoption Network Cleveland

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Beagle, Ranking Member Tavares, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee:

My name is Aaron Ockerman and I am the legislative agent for the Adoption Network Cleveland. On behalf of our Executive Director, Betsie Norris, I am pleased to offer our support for HB 420 sponsored by Representatives Emelia Sykes and Janine Boyd.

With a wide array of programs and services, Adoption Network Cleveland has been recognized nationally as a successful model for effective service and advocacy for members of the formal and informal (kinship) adoption community including adoptees, adoptive/kinship families, birthparents, youth in foster care and related professionals. We also seek to serve as a resource to the community. We do this through active support and discussion groups, educational offerings, public awareness campaigns, and advocacy efforts. I am always pleased to walk into many of your offices and see our mugs, candy jars, and other memorabilia that we have handed out over the years on our Statehouse visits.

It only makes sense that we lend our strong support to HB 420, legislation that designates November as adoption awareness month. In addition to the much needed attention that this legislation brings to adoption, adoption advocates will be able to use the results of this bill to promote our causes and bring new members to our organizations. Far from symbolic, HB 420 will result in not just awareness but a new level of activity as adoption supporters and advocates use this designation to galvanize members and rally to support the host of issues that positively impact adoption and foster care. We urge your support of this important bill.

Mr. Chairman this concludes my remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee might have.