



Ohio House Finance Committee  
May 6, 2019  
Testimony from Susan Marshall  
Executive Director, Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services (OCAPS)

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony about H.B. 166, and in particular, the Adult Protective Services program, a part of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' budget. My name is Susan Marshall and I am the Executive Director of the Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services (OCAPS).

The Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services is a statewide coalition that strives to enhance the provision of services to adults at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation through collaboration, education and advocacy.

Thank you for the \$1.49 million per SFY increase in the substitute House Bill. We appreciate the General Assembly's continued support for adult protective services and acknowledgment that more needs to be done. With this increase, each county will receive a little over \$48,000 per year to support their programs, which is more than the \$31,000 per year current rate, yet still simply not enough to carry out the responsibility of Ohio's Adult Protective Services system.

The Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services supports increased investments to bolster and reinforce the effectiveness of this important social structure to prevent elder abuse and neglect. As it stands currently, there is no other dedicated source of funding for Ohio's Adult Protective Services beyond the state line-item in the Job and Family Services' budget.

While some communities have successfully leveraged local dollars to expand their system, there remains undue pressure on the community to deal with competing yet important priorities, and results in a distinct disparity in capacity between those counties with the means to further subsidize the system compared to those who cannot. There, often, the responsibility for those who are 60 and older has been passed off to already strained Child Protective Services workers. This practice is unfair to both the staff and to all of us who only want to live healthy, engaged and secure lives with access to the supports we need to remain in our homes as productive members of our communities.

We believe in a just society which recognizes that all people are equal no matter how old we are. Policies and programs that connect us to our communities at all stages of life are the most effective strategy for curtailing elder abuse and neglect. Without this structural stability, social isolation occurs, putting us at greater risk of neglect and abuse.

Adult Protective Services is among the pillars we rely on to be there for us as we age. This support has been reinforced with recent changes to law, improved understanding of elder abuse, included

more mandatory reporters, fortified our state and local systems and connected interrelated supports to improve Ohio's local solutions.

This transformation of Adult Protective Services has resulted in a system that is intended to be more responsive to our communities and better positioned to respond quickly to reports of elder abuse. One example, each county must now establish its own interdisciplinary team (I-Team) bringing together at a minimum, Adult Protective Services, law enforcement, courts, and social services to engage in case reviews, raise awareness, offer interagency education while identifying gaps and needed resources in the community. I-Teams are an incredibly useful tool to leverage resources and expertise however, it takes both time and people to develop relationships to address the many facets of elder abuse.

We are all aging, and we are living longer. This is Ohio's Longevity Era. Our communities are social structures that need strong, integrated supports to bridge connections for all of us as we age. Supports, including Adult Protective Services, are needed to keep the structure sound and to effectively prevent and address all forms of elder abuse and neglect.

That is why the Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services is asking for an increased investment for Adult Protective Services: to enable local communities to make more solutions, strengthen existing connections and to find better ways to provide timely justice and resolutions addressing elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

It is 2019 and there are counties in Ohio without a dedicated, full-time adult protective service worker. Each county should be provided with at least \$65,000 per year so that every county can employ at least one full-time staff person and additional resources to offer critical wrap-around, supportive services addressing immediate essentials while enabling a more systemic response to the needs of our communities. To shore up this critical support, **we ask for an investment of \$5.77 million per year above the proposed funding levels in the substitute bill** of \$4.23 million per year.

Elder abuse is not going away. From SFY 2017 to SFY 2018, Ohio Adult Protective Services statewide received 3,000 more reports of elder maltreatment, totaling almost 20,000 reports in one year. Anecdotally we believe that these numbers are only increasing, aligning with recent research that says that an estimated 100,000 or more cases of elder abuse and neglect occur in Ohio each year.

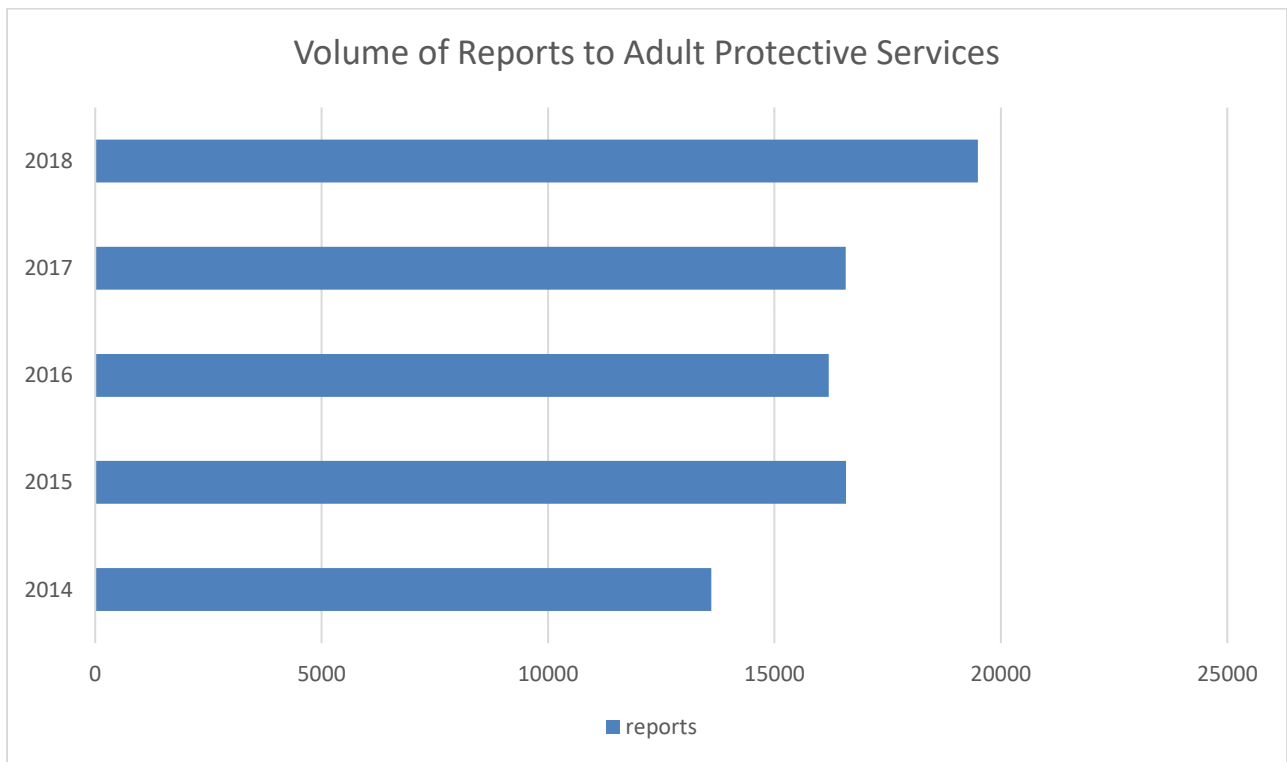
The consequences of not having a robust adult protective services system, ensuring access to justice as we age, is significant. Nationally estimated to be \$36.5 billion per year, financial losses can bankrupt individuals, and even other family members, causing survivors to turn to publicly funded programs to provide for their most basic needs. In fact, one in ten financial abuse victims will turn to Medicaid as a direct result of their own monies being stolen from them. Victims of elder abuse and neglect are four times more likely to be admitted to a nursing home and three times more likely to be admitted to a hospital.

To conclude, the Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services respectfully requests that you consider an increased investment in adult protective services providing each county at least **\$65,000 per year** so that every county can employ one full-time staff person and additional resources for critical, wrap-around, supportive services enabling the dedicated Adult Protective Services worker to create

a feasible safety plan for the abused older adult, alleviating further risk, while building strong communities ready to form a place for all of us to live, work, play and thrive. An investment of **\$5.77 million per year above the proposed funding levels in the substitute bill** of \$4.23 million per year provides the critical investment needed for Ohio's present as well as Ohio's future.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,  
Susan Marshall  
Executive Director  
Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services





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