

Ohio Senate
Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee
12/9/2020

Good Afternoon, Chairman Hoagland, Vice Chair Schaffer, Ranking Member O'Brien, and members of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. My name is Bonnie J. Shuman. Thank you for the opportunity to present written proponent testimony on behalf of SB 340. I regret that, due to my at-risk age factor I cannot address you in person.

Also, I wish to thank Senator Kunze for being willing to listen to and really hear my concerns when I first approached her about this legislation.

I am the mother of a 35-year-old (adopted) son who has Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and who, under probate order, resides at Columbus Developmental Center. FAS has made his early life and ours extremely difficult.

You probably know that FAS has many manifestations and degrees. It causes permanent, irreversible damage to the person born with it. Teddy does have moderate retardation, ADD, and speech problems. But his most crippling issue, caused by frontal lobe damage which is frequent in folks with FAS, is his impulsive acts of aggression—usually against his father and me and sometimes in public. These issues, which began when he was 7, led to private therapy, multiple psychiatric stays, several residential placements, and constant upheaval for all of us. His father and I were constantly “walking on eggshells.”

Thanks to the structured and competent care he has received at Columbus Developmental Center, Teddy has developed into a delightful and productive young man. But all his difficulties might have been prevented if bills like SB 340 had been in effect.

Twenty-seven states have passed similar measures, and they seem to have produced positive results. It is my hope that the passage of SB 340 will be a giant step toward improving the health of Ohio's babies and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as a proponent and I can be reached regarding questions through the chairs office.