



September 30, 2019

Chair Lehner, Ranking Member Fedor and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Our community has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the country. In Franklin County, too many babies do not reach their first birthdays. CelebrateOne is the collective community impact initiative created to address Columbus and Franklin County's unacceptably high infant mortality rate. Our focus is on providing resources to support mothers and infants to ensure every child born in our community has the opportunity to thrive. We are committed to the mothers and infants in our community. CelebrateOne is focused on reducing the infant mortality rate by 40% and cutting the racial disparity rate in half by 2020.

With the recent announcement to offer testimony on Senate Bill 121, we want to share with you the considerable impact the proposed bill has on our youth in Columbus and Franklin County. Like you, we are committed to improving the lives of people in our community and we want to emphasize how important health education is to the families we serve.

Ohio has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the nation. Additionally, Ohio ranks 23rd out of all 50 states for teenage pregnancies. Unintended pregnancy is associated with increased risks to mother and baby including maternal stress and preterm birth, a leading cause of infant mortality. We believe that this bill would address the importance of health behaviors of young females that can contribute to poor birth outcomes such as tobacco use and nutrition. Many Columbus youth experience barriers to essential health knowledge and access to services they need to make a safe and responsible life-planning decisions that are critical to individual and family well-being. The development and adoption of K-12 health education standards will help alleviate these barriers and result in positive long-term health and birth outcomes. This bill will empower young people with the skills needed to lead healthy lives. By creating and maintaining a minimum standard of health education in Ohio, we can build the foundations of reducing health disparities, reducing child poverty, reducing public spending on health care, and reducing infant mortality in our communities.

We are asking you to stand with the residents of central Ohio and pass Senate Bill 121 to require the State Board of Education to develop and adopt health education standards for grades K-12 by July 1, 2020.

Thank you for your consideration,

Priyam Chokshi, Director of Community & Legislative Strategies
CelebrateOne

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Celebrate One Partners

Columbus Public Health Central Ohio Hospital Council Columbus Department of Development Franklin County Board of Commissioners
Franklin County Families and Children First Council Ohio Department of Medicaid Columbus City Council Franklin County Department of
Job and Family Services Ohio Better Birth Outcomes Collaborative Partners for Kids