**Terry Russell – NAMI Ohio Testimony - HB 166**

**Ohio Senate Finance Committee**

*June 13, 2019*

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Burke, Ranking Minority Member Sykes and members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on HB 166. My name is Terry Russell and I am the Executive Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Ohio. I am testifying before you today to urge you to restore the funding cut by the Ohio Senate for mental health and addiction services in HB 166.

As you know, Governor DeWine prioritized behavioral health and children’s healthy development in his Executive Budget. Governor DeWine talked of the need to invest in children and the mental health system, so that we can “shift the paradigm” that has allowed suicide rates to increase year of year, and for children and adults with mental illness to go untreated. He compared these investments to the trees he plants on his property every year that he may never see fully-grown, but his children and grandchildren will enjoy the fruits of that labor many years from today.

The Ohio House of Representatives further reinforced Governor DeWine’s commitment to improving the mental health of Ohioans by adding to his investments for mental health and addiction. I am testifying before you today to ask for your full support for that commitment by restoring the funding for mental health and addiction services cut in the Senate Substitute version of HB 166.

Specifically, I am asking the Senate to restore the $36M over the biennium in for statewide prevention, treatment and stigma reduction campaigns, education, curricula and services for children and adults (ALI # 336623).

I am also asking the Senate to restore the $125M cut from the Student Wellness and Success line item (ALI # 200625) in HB 166. In addition to restoring this funding, we suggest that you add language to HB 166 to establish a small committee of stakeholders to specifically define the outcomes and activities for which this funding will be dedicated. We recommend that the committee include ADAMHS boards, behavioral health providers, families & people impacted by mental illness, and school administrators & educators and youth development experts. The committee would ensure the efficient and effective use of this funding so that every child in every school has access to prevention and treatment for mental illness and addiction.

On behalf of families and people with mental illness, thank you for considering these requests. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.