

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



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February 19, 2019

The Honorable Dave Burke
Chair, Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee
Ohio Senate
Ohio Statehouse
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee—

On behalf of the 2,900 members of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I am writing today to express our support for Senate Bill 6, sponsored by Senators Coley and Hottinger.

While it is unfortunate that this legislation is needed, SB 6 responds to a very real need for children whose parents are in a state of crisis. We know that the drug epidemic and other societal issues are disrupting homes and placing children at risk. Many parents want to seek help, but face significant challenges and a lack of options for the care of their children. SB 6 provides these parents with an impactful way to ensure their children can be cared for while they seek out treatment or take actions necessary to stabilize their lives.

I want to commend the bill sponsors for taking on this important issue and working with child advocates to ensure the bill includes robust protections for children who enter into this program. One potential change I think the committee should consider is requiring host families to adhere to rules adopted by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for foster homes. These rules include requirements that harmful household items including firearms and prescription drugs are securely stored. These rules are crafted to ensure children are placed in the safest possible setting.

It is my hope that SB 6 can be signed into law this year and that Ohio will have an adequate supply of host families to fulfill this important role. Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa Werve Arnold".

Melissa Werve Arnold
Chief Executive Officer
Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics