



State Senator
TINA MAHARATH

3rd District

Sponsor Testimony
Senator Tina Maharath
Senate Bill 80
Insurance and Financial Institutions Committee
Wednesday, April 3, 2019

Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Antonio, Vice Chair Huffman and members of the Health, Human Services, and Medicaid committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 80. Senate Bill 80 designates the last week of September as "Diaper Need Awareness Week" to raise awareness of the need of diapers for low-income families and their babies and toddlers. It is also meant to inspire the Ohio Legislature and all Ohioans to increase sustainable support for diaper bank programs in Ohio.

For the average family, the cost of diapers can range from \$80-\$150 per month. According to the 2017 State of America's Children report by the Children's Defense Fund, there are about three million children whose families are trying to survive on \$2 a day per person, which rivals child poverty in some of the world's poorest countries. More than half of all poor children in 2016 lived in eight states, including Ohio. There are approximately 697,923 children under the age of 5 in Ohio. 192,571 of children in Ohio under the age of six were categorized as poor and 95,676 of children in Ohio were categorized as very poor.

Children in low-income families are at the greatest risk of suffering the effects of diaper need. Current public support programs help some, but young children have additional needs. Far too often are families forced to choose between food on the table and the appropriate number of diapers for their children. The only federal assistance program that can be used for diapers is TANF. Unfortunately, for many families TANF has to cover many other expenses, including heat, electric and water bills, rent, clothing, transportation, and other basic needs. Limited funds are available to purchase enough diapers to keep a baby clean, dry, and healthy.

Most child care facilities require parents to provide diapers for their child. Nationally, 57% of parents experiencing diaper need who rely on child care said they missed an average of four days of school or work in the past month because they didn't have diapers.

I appreciate your attention to this important issue and I respectfully request your favorable consideration of Senate Bill 80. Thank you and I am happy to respond to questions from the committee.