

Witness Testimony – House Bill 488 Ohio House of Representatives
Civil Justice Committee
March 8, 2022

To Representative Hollyer, Representative Grendell and Representative Galonski, and all members of the committee.

Here is my written testimony in opposition to HB 488. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony

I am writing regarding House Bill 488 that is on the upcoming Civil Justice Committee meeting schedule for March 8. I submitted testimony for the December 7th meeting in opposition to the bill due to the surprising insertion into the bill regarding “legal services for judges”. I just received the amendments that are being considered for this bill. I had counted on the wisdom on the committee members writing the amendment to drop the entire section on Legal Services for Judges from this bill. I would then wholeheartedly support the bill. It should be a clean guardianship bill, not spoiled with legislation that would remove checks and balances and safeguards regarding selection of, and payment to, judges and/or their staff. This section of HB 488 appears to directly benefit a local Geauga County Probate judge and that it is being submitted by his spouse, lends even more distaste to it’s inclusion. There should not be the appearance of a conflict of interest between the sponsor of the bill and at least one person who will benefit from it.

Regarding the amendments – I was surprised to see three choices of amendments and disappointed that none of them removed the language of “legal services to judges”, therefore continuing to put language into the bill that removes current safeguards. In my opinion, if this judicial legal services language was important across the state, it should be removed from this bill and incorporated into it’s own separate bill.

Please make this a clean, much-needed guardianship bill. Remove all language regarding “legal services for judges from this bill”

Sincerely,

Barbara Z. Partington

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