



## Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association

37 West Broad Street, Suite 1120 • Columbus, Ohio 43215  
614-221-3688

Ohio House of Representatives  
Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee  
Testimony in Support of House Bill 83  
May 13, 2021

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston and members of the Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB83. My name is Joel Potts and I am the executive director of the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association (OJFSDA). OJFSDA represents county department of job and family service agencies who administer cash assistance, food assistance/SNAP, childcare, Medicaid and adult protective services. In many instances we also provide child protective services (in sixty five counties), workforce development programs (including seventy-three of the state's OhioMeansJobs centers) and child support enforcement (in sixty-eight counties).

HB83 opens up availability of child support to nonparent caretakers who are the primary caregivers for a child. While this may be a departure from the way we traditionally think of child support, this legislation reflects the evolving state of families as we continue to deal with the consequences of the addiction epidemic.

We are seeing a growing number of cases where a third-party caretaker is providing primary care for a child because neither parent is able to. Ohio needs a straightforward and consistent process to acknowledge these third-party caretakers and connect them to the resources necessary to care for the children in their charge.

To illustrate the complexity of this situation, I'd like to call your attention to the following points:

- The caretaker universe is broad and includes those with legal custody, as well as those with only physical custody of a child.
- A majority of these cases occur outside of the child welfare system.
- Not all county child support agencies can provide services to caretakers due to appellate case law or local practice. Caretakers are treated differently county to county, creating a disparate approach where some get all services and some get none.
- Many caretakers are on a limited or fixed income that makes it hard to sustain a stable household.

HB83 creates a consistent path for these caretakers to obtain needed services from child support enforcement agencies. Additionally, the bill provides child support agencies a uniform process to use for investigations and recommendations. Due process rights are afforded to both parents and the caretaker and a process is set for termination of redirection orders if the child returns to the former custodial parent.

The intent of child support is to provide resources to the household that is caring for that child. In today's environment, that household often looks different than it did in the past. HB83 acknowledges this and allows us to move forward and ensure children get the support they deserve.