

May 13, 2021  
HB110 Testimony  
Senate Finance Committee

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Phyllis Felix. I am a senior citizen and a member of Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality (NOBLE). I am speaking today on behalf of the need to greatly increase funding for Adult Protective Services.

As you are aware Adult Protective Services protects vulnerable adults, particularly the elderly from abuse, neglect and financial exploitation living in the communities of Ohio. It is overseen by the Department of Job and Family Services and is administered at the county level in each of Ohio's 88 counties. In recent years we have seen a steady increase of reports of elder abuse in Ohio, well over 50%. However, only a fraction of those cases are reported, with research indicating that the number of those elderly abused is 170,000 or more yearly. The abuse can include neglect by those who are responsible for caring for those who cannot take care of themselves. It can include abuse, physical or otherwise, by family members or others. It can include exploitation by caretakers taking our money or medications. As a senior citizen myself, I am fortunate to be healthy and vigorous, but as we get older, we become more vulnerable.

Although the provision of Adult Protective Services is a mandated service in Ohio's counties, Ohio is not providing enough funds in its budget to cover the cost of even employing one full time staff person per county along with other resources to ensure the safety of our seniors and other vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect. This is not acceptable. There needs to be an increase in funding to this critical service. NOBLE is requesting that the amount funded be at \$22.75 million per year for adult protective services in this year's biennium budget. This amount would protect about 100,000 elderly Ohioans who are being abused, well below the 170,000 or more who are being abused, but a major step in the right direction.

As the number of elderly people, particularly frail elderly, continues to increase in Ohio, it is vital that we give the counties the resources that are necessary to protect those who are being abused, neglected, and exploited.

Thank you for your consideration.

Phyllis