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Controlling Board

Sponsor Testimony
Senate Bill 176
Ohio House Civil Justice Committee
November 12, 2024

Chair Hillyer, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn, and members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak on Senate Bill 176.

Senate Bill 176 will allow child support orders to be issued, modified, or extended for people over the age of eighteen who have a disability. Current law stipulates that all active child support orders must terminate on a child's eighteenth birthday, with exceptions made for children attending an accredited high school on a full-time basis after their eighteenth birthday, and for children with disabilities. The latter exception, however, is only applicable to child support orders issued while the child was under the age of eighteen, and whose mental or physical disability renders the person incapable of supporting or maintaining oneself.

This bill would allow family courts to issue child support orders for disabled children aged eighteen years or older so long as the disability began while the person was still a minor. This is intended to be a permissive change, not to supplant other existing mechanisms like special needs trusts. Our legislation simply provides families and courts with another tool to ensure that disabled children can receive the support and care that they may need.

According to a 2021 report from the University of Cincinnati Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, approximately 23.5% of children in Ohio have at least one type of disability and 22.2% of children in Ohio have an intellectual or developmental disability. Further, 34.5% of these children require specialized health care. The care that many of these children receive from their parents will not cease once the child turns eighteen. To quote the report, “family support is a critical service for improving the health outcomes for people with disabilities.”¹ This bill recognizes this reality and addresses it in a practical way, alleviating some of the financial burden produced by caring for a disabled child and ensuring that these individuals are taken care of even into adulthood.

Senator Romanchuk and I look forward to working with this committee as this bill continues through the committee process, and we look forward to soliciting feedback from the public on this bill.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 176. I welcome any questions you may have.

¹ “2021 Report: A Profile of People With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities In Ohio,” University of Cincinnati Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (2021), https://www.ucucedd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Pages-from-UCCEDD_Needs-Assessment_FinalReport_9.10.21_alt-text-4-reduced.pdf