

### 47th House District

Portions of Butler County, including  
Hamilton and Fairfield, Ross  
Township and portions of Fairfield,  
Hanover and St. Clair townships

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## Sara P. Carruthers Ohio State Representative

### Committees

- Finance-
- Finance Subcommittee on Health & Human Services-
- Transportation-
- Behavioral Health- Homeland Security-

### Commissions/Councils/Boards

- Early Childhood Advisory Council-
- Ohio Children's Trust Fund-
- Ohio Arts Council-
- Ohio Holocaust & Genocide Memorial & Education Commission-

Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Miller, Ranking Member Denson, and members of the Families and Aging Committee, I am grateful to be standing in front of you today to speak about House Bill 465, better known as Lauren's Law.

Lauren Carter, a 36-year-old Ohio woman who is developmentally disabled has been the victim of disturbing abuse and neglect while in Intermediate Care Facilities for three decades. Imagine your child being left behind on a bus in the middle of July for five hours, suffering in the unforgiving heat with no ability to move around, eat, or drink. Imagine if your child's throat was cut, but those "caring" for them don't know how the incident that left your child needing stitches happened. These are just some of the horrible things on a long list of incidents that have happened to Lauren over the years.

Lauren's parents have requested to have cameras in the facilities, but they have been rejected numerous times. You may think, "Shouldn't Esther's Law allow cameras in the room to document what is going on?" Unfortunately, Esther's Law only mandates this in nursing homes, not the types of facilities Lauren is in, an Intermediate Care Facility.

Lauren's Law will close this loophole and bring much-needed assurance and raised regulations to client care facilities. This legislation will also provide payments from the Medicaid Waiver Program to families caring for loved ones at nearly the same rate it pays facilities. Families who want to and are able to be a full-time caretaker for their children should be able to do so.

There may be opponents to this bill who say that families don't have the same costs that facilities have, insurance, specialized equipment, and facilities. But I would point out that paying a family member to take care of their loved ones shouldn't concern taxpayers because the same amount of money is being used, whether it is used to support the family or the facility.

I will always be a strong advocate for protecting Ohio's most vulnerable. Lauren's Law is a step in the right direction to help families who are in desperate need of better care for their loved ones. Now is the time for us in the legislature to be a voice for those who feel like they don't have one.

Thank you, Chairwoman Schmidt, for bringing this crucial legislation before the committee today. Should this legislation receive a second hearing, you will hear about these first-hand tragedies for Lauren's family. I am happy to answer any questions.