

WRITTEN TESTIMONY (PROPONENT) OF KIMBERLY LAUDICK
OHIO COUNCIL OF YWCAs
BEFORE THE OHIO SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
SENATOR MATT DOLAN, CHAIR
AM.SUB.H.B.33
MAY 25, 2023

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. I am Kimberly I. Laudick, President/CEO of the YWCA of Van Wert County and a member of the Ohio Council of YWCAs. Our Council is made up of the 13 YWCA chapters across the State, and we are committed to our goals of eliminating racism and empowering women.

I am here to provide proponent testimony in favor of Am.Sub.H.B. 33, which would increase the Council's earmark to \$1.5 million per year to support specific programming in YWCA chapters that provide direct services to women and children victimized by gender-based violence throughout the State, and to continue and expand community outreach through youth development and prevention programs. More specifically, the bill would support Council programs that:

- Prevent domestic violence,
- Support victims of domestic violence,
- Provide trauma-informed services for survivors of domestic violence, and
- Support outreach and development opportunities through youth development and prevention programming.

These services would include emergency shelters, crisis hotline support and non-residential services. We provide wraparound services that address gender-based violence, including trauma-informed support for survivors such as counseling, case management, substance abuse services and prevention education in the community.

Our member organizations reached more than 90,000 women, girls and family members last year through our programming. Our current sources of funding include federal and private and sources, and the state during the last two operating budgets also provided TANF funding to the Council so that we could meet ongoing needs of the communities and the vulnerable populations we serve, which was helpful. However, the bill will increase our ability to serve more individuals in need, improve program quality and increase the impact of those we serve. Each year, demand for the services we provide grows, as our programming is much vaster than the two areas for which we are seeking funding. Our major programs include subject matters that address human trafficking and gender violence prevention, as well as Women and Girls' empowerment, economic development, leadership, family development (including teen family development), health and wellness, senior community service, and racial justice and civil rights.

Our programs are curriculum based and outcome-centered, and we sustain active service partnerships and referral channels throughout our respective communities. In fact, YWCA chapters collectively partner and collaborate with over 45 school districts and alternative schools statewide for programming and after school care. Finally, we provide a variety of educational opportunities for youth as part of wrap-around services.

YWCA of Van Wert County was founded in 1916 and has served the community with mission focused programming for over 100 years. The local vision of the YWCA drives the inspiration of our work: By lifting voices and providing safe spaces, the YWCA of Van Wert County will empower all to maximize opportunities and advocate for systems change.

The goal of the YWCA Survivor Services Program is to empower those we serve to reclaim their lives and to become self-sufficient independent individuals who go on to live violence-free and successful lives. All staff has undergone trauma training and as a trauma informed facility, we strive to help families and individuals living at the YWCA by offering a wide array of therapy opportunities either in a group or individual setting. Also, YWCA of Van Wert County's Anti-Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault Services are dedicated to eradicating Human Trafficking in the forms of sexual, labor, and child trafficking as well as sexual assault of every kind. Two YWCA staff members sit on the executive committee of the Northwest Ohio Rescue and Restore Coalition which is a 16 county coalition dedicated to bringing awareness to human trafficking in the region as well as raising funds to assist survivors.

Through our Youth Development Program, we are able to serve approximately 20,000 meals each year to the youth in our community for free. All children are able to participate in our Youth programming, however YWCA targets low income families who are facing food insecurity – which in turn provides children with a basic need that is not being met elsewhere. Additional programming includes several outcomes based curriculums. Through all of our trauma responsive programs and activities we are extremely involved in Van Wert County and we are very proud of the work we do in our community.

The requested funds would be a line-item appropriation in TANF Block Grant funding, which will not cost the state any General Revenue Funds as it is an allocation of federal pass-through dollars.

The Governor's proposed budget was a great start to emphasizing the resources to be devoted to areas in social services to protect the most vulnerable Ohioans in Am.Sub.H.B.33. The House-passed version is an improvement to the bill from because it demonstrates a clear commitment to support programming in organizations such as ours that are also on the front lines to address those we serve. The bill's current funding is consistent with that priority.

Chair Dolan, we urge the committee to favorably consider the bill. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.