



Ohio Children's Alliance

Leading change for child and family service providers

House State and Local Government Committee

June 25, 2024

Ohio Children's Alliance Proponent Testimony on SB 182

Chair Dolan, Vice Chair Cirino, Ranking Member Sykes, and distinguished members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill (SB) 182.

My name is Kate Rossman, and I represent the Ohio Children's Alliance, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting the needs of Ohio's families, communities, and the providers who serve them. Our organization operates several key programs including Ohio Reach, an ODHE program supporting young adults transitioning from foster care into higher education and adulthood. Through Ohio Reach, we provide essential resources, mentorship, and support to help these individuals navigate post-secondary education and early adult life.

Senate Bill 182 is a critical step forward in providing necessary support to foster care alumni through scholarships. This initiative aligns with the successful models in other states, like Texas and Connecticut, which have shown that reducing financial barriers increases college graduation rates among foster care alumni. We support the bill's intention to ensure that foster youth in Ohio have every opportunity to succeed academically and professionally.

The success of these youth would stand to directly and significantly benefit the state by reducing long-term social and economic costs. Research shows that former foster youth who achieve higher education and stable employment are more likely to be active contributors to the economy and their communities. According to a study by the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, every young person who ages out of foster care without a stable transition costs the state an average of \$300,000 over their lifetime. By investing in their success, the state can foster a more skilled and productive workforce, ultimately leading to a more prosperous Ohio.

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In considering the broad scope of this bill, and recognizing the varied expertise within our state, it might be worth noting the potential value in local insights for the administration of such significant initiatives. Currently in the bill the current ETV (Education Training Voucher) grantee, an out-of-state organization, would automatically become the chosen partner with ODHE on this program.

SB 182 represents a significant investment in their future and the future of our state, and we appreciate your consideration. Thank you once again for your dedication to Ohio's children. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn Rossman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kate Rossman
Manager, Policy
Ohio Children's Alliance

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