

IN-PERSON testimony for HB 5.

To: Chair Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony today on behalf of House Bill 5, the Adoption Modernization Act

From: Misty Bauer

Date: 11/13/24

My name is Misty Bauer I live in Loveland Ohio, in Senate District 7. I was a former foster parent with Clermont County Job and Family Services and would like to share my adoption experience with you and how it relates to this bill. My son was immediately placed in foster care after he was born. His biological parents and biological family never attended a hearing or a visitation despite all the best efforts to reach them from various social workers and county employees. After 6 months of no contact, parental rights were terminated. At this point my son had already had his first birthday, began taking his first steps and babbling mama. It took almost another year before he was adopted. This was because after parental rights were terminated, he had to remain in the home another 6 months before the adoption could occur. This bill allows loving families to petition to adopt and count the time the child has already lived in the home towards that 6-month waiting period. Job and family services had already conducted a thorough and extensive home study in which I was approved to foster and adopt. While I am very thankful for the support and services of Clermont County, counting time already in the home would have allowed the adoption process to take place much sooner, allowing time, money and already thin resources to be devoted to more difficult cases. My son is a very smart, happy, healthy 5-and-a-half-year-old who has been involved in piano classes, gymnastics, soccer, basketball, and tee ball. He has brought so much joy and love into not only my life but the lives of everyone who knows him. While my son's case was not complicated, there are foster and kinship families who have over 2 years pass before parental rights are terminated and they still must wait that additional 6 months before adoption. This bill will make the adoption process more streamlined and help expedite permanent homes for Ohio children. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. Chair Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to address you today and I ask the committee members to please vote yes on House Bill 5. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.

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