



State Representative Beth Lear

House District 61

MEMORDANUM

TO: House Community Revitalization Committee

From: State Representative Beth Lear

RE: Sponsor Testimony for House Bill 262

Chair Click, Vice Chair Mullins, Ranking Member Brewer, and Members of the House Community Revitalization Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 262, which, if passed, will recognize the time between Mother's Day and Father's Day as Natural Family Month.

The natural family—a man and a woman united in marriage, raising their biological and/or adopted children—is the foundational institution in our free society. For generations, this family structure has provided stability, nurtured moral and civic virtues, and ensured the overall health and prosperity of our communities.

The replacement birth rate for society is 2.1 children per family, and in 2023, America saw it drop to a shocking 1.6¹. Ohio's birth rate is hardly better at 1.7, according to an Ohio.gov² report. Our society is no longer creating enough children to replace itself, and Representative Williams and I hope a bill like this will help encourage marriage and families.

Research³ consistently shows that children raised in stable, married households tend to experience better outcomes in education, mental and physical health, and economic security. Furthermore, strong families help reduce reliance on state resources and create safer, more engaged neighborhoods.

¹ Department of Sociology – University of Wisconsin, sociology.wisc.edu/2023/09/08/is-us-fertility-now-below-replacement-evidence-from-period-vs-cohort-trends-by-lawrence-wu-nicholas-mark-august-2023/

² Ohio.gov, dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/development.ohio.gov/research/pop1/State-of-Ohio-Population-Projections-Report-2023.pdf

³ Institute for Family Studies, ifstudies.org/report-brief

Designating this time period as Natural Family Month aligns with efforts to promote family formation, encourage parental involvement with both parents, and inspire cultural appreciation for the role that natural families play in the well-being of our state. This bill would invite schools, community groups, faith organizations, and government institutions to host events, promote educational materials, and support policies that strengthen families.

Pope Leo XIV affirmed the natural family unit in his address to the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See. The Pope said, “It is the responsibility of government leaders to work to build harmonious and peaceful civil societies. This can be achieved above all by investing in the family, founded upon the stable union between a man and a woman, ‘a small but genuine society, and prior to all civil society’”.⁴

As legislators, we can work to obtain a peaceful and harmonious society, like the Pope mentioned, if we focus on prioritizing the natural family unit. This isn’t a new idea. This idea of the natural family being the beginning of a firm society has been around for hundreds of years. Take Augustine for example, who wrote, “The first natural bond of human society, therefore, is that of husband and wife ... the result is the bonding of society in its children”.

Lastly, it’s important to note that the best way to ensure children avoid poverty is for them to start life in an intact family unit whenever possible, then get an education, then get a job, then get married and have children. Promoting the natural family gives us the best chance at changing direction. We can stave off poverty, and the increasing requirement for government services if we instead encourage family creation. This bill offers us a chance to celebrate the blessings of family life and acknowledge the countless mothers, fathers, and children who contribute daily to the fabric of our communities.

We respectfully ask for your support of House Bill 262 and would be happy to answer any questions the members may have.

Thank you.

⁴ The Vatican, www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/speeches/2025/may/documents/20250516-corpo-diplomatico.html

Additional sites for consideration:

- National Library of Medicine, [pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2930824/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2930824/)
- The Natural Family, thenaturalfamily.org/