

Chairman Click, Vice Chair Mullins, Ranking Member Brewer, and members of the Community Revitalization Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Nycole Clark. I am a resident of Perrysburg, OH, a Mother of 1 and a Wife of 18 years to a wonderful man. I am strongly opposed to H.B No 262 designating a "Natural Family Month."

I myself grew up in what the proposing Representatives would call a "broken home." My parents were not a great match at all; they fought like cats and dogs both physically and mentally, and the first 13 years of my life were spent trying to protect my brother and sister and myself from following the path that kids often do when those who are to raise them are otherwise distracted. When our parents finally split during the Christmas break of my Freshman year of high school, it was oddly the best gift we could have been given. We each breathed a sigh of relief that this "staying together for the kids" nonsense would stop. It was the same thing my mother and her sister endured when their mother was constantly beaten by her husband, because it was frowned upon for families to split up no matter what the reasons could be. I'm proud to say all 3 of us children broke that cycle and are in healthy, loving relationships with kids and no abuse.

Which brings me to the discussion today regarding "natural family month." I am not in support of the government taking this much interest into what people determine their family unit to be. This is overreaching and when coupled with the talks about incentivizing people to have more kids simply to raise the birth rate, plus the "Success Planning" teachings that are trying to creep into Ohio, it starts sounding like a dystopian Handmaid's Tale right here in Midwest USA.

Our government and the People in it must help us make life more affordable and enjoyable for those here already, and the way that it's done in a home should be of little interest, let alone need a month named for it that clearly divides out what some deem as praiseworthy while alienating the rest. Using the word "Natural" is instantly saying that those that fall outside of that are abnormal or strange, and should not be treated as if what they are doing is right, or acceptable; and how can we say that a "family", regardless of its makeup, is not natural if it contains people who care for one another and love the members in it? This Article shared how truly, we should be more focused on making sure that whatever the structure is, it contains individuals with quality relationships:

<https://actforyouth.org/adolescence/demographics/family.cfm> .

There was also a ton of data shared in this study here

(<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2022/demo/p70->

[174.pdf](#) ), and again from it we can see that there are so many potential makeups of a “family” and that to say that we need to overly promote what is already the “norm” in everyday life is just excessive and again crosses a line. We need to be telling our youth that being in a healthy, stable, and loving relationship is what is important, and the makeup of that can vary vastly, but as long as we as a community are investing in each household (regardless of the way it is assembled) with the same level of vigor and interest, we can help everyone rise. There's no need to waste precious legislature time on something that doesn't do anything positive for Ohioans as a whole. Married couples already get the benefits of things like health insurance, joint filing on taxes, credits they can file as parents together. We don't need to act like it's a dying thing when we still see such a high percentage of people married as it is, compared to unwed.

I ask you to please consider my testimony and vote *NO* on this unnecessary, dangerously worded bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Nycole Clark

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