

Notes for General Assembly

1. Introduction

- Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.
 - My name is Josue Santiago. I stand before you not just as a pastor, but as someone who escaped communism 11 years ago in search of freedom.
 - I found that freedom here in America—especially here in Ohio, a state that has become my home.
 - Here, I have been able to raise a family, serve the Lord, and give back to my community.
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2. The Biblical Foundation of Family

- In Scripture, God created everything with the environment of family in mind. Both the spiritual and natural world revolve around the family.
 - If someone wanted to destroy a society, the first attack would be against the family structure.
 - Jesus Himself was entrusted to a family—Joseph and Mary.
 - The health of a nation always depends on the health of its families.
 - Break the family, and you break the future of children, and ultimately, the future of a nation.
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3. The Enemy's Strategy

- The enemy knows this truth—so his strategy is to weaken families.
- He makes fathers abandon homes, leaving children vulnerable.
- In the U.S., about 1 in 4 children live in a father-absent household. The Institute for Family Studies reports that around 2.8 million fewer children were in father-absent homes in 2024 compared to 2012, following efforts to strengthen families.
- Studies also show that 70–85% of incarcerated youth come from fatherless homes.
- In a study of 14,000 US children, researchers found that 40 percent lack strong emotional bonds with their parents—bonds that are crucial to success later in life.
- According to the report, published by *Sutton Trust*, children under the age of three who do not form strong bonds with their mothers or fathers are more likely to be aggressive, defiant, and hyperactive as adults.
- The result: broken dreams, poverty, crime, and hopelessness.
- A strong family, on the other hand, produces strong citizens.

4. The Cultural Challenge

- As a nation, we dedicate entire months to various causes and identities.
- Some of these, like Pride Month, do not bring spiritual blessing or strengthen our society.
- But how much more important would it be to dedicate a Family Month—something that blesses every child, every parent, and every community?

5. Personal Testimony: The Warning from Communism

- In Cuba, under communism, families were systematically broken.
- The government indoctrinated children and crushed their dreams.
- When the family unit is destroyed, the nation becomes easy to control.
- That is why I escaped—and why I believe family is America's greatest defense and greatest treasure.

6. Call to Action

- America must invest in the family—this is not optional, it's essential.
- Declaring a Family Month is not just symbolic—it is a statement that family matters.
- It is an investment into the future of our children, our state, and our nation.
- Ohio can lead the way for America by affirming that family is the foundation of freedom.