

Members of the Committee,

Let's be very clear: **the only people who would benefit from HB 172 are child abusers.**

Repealing this law—one that has protected young people for 36 years—would leave many vulnerable Ohio youth without access to essential mental health services. For countless children, the ability to seek care without parental notification is not a convenience; it is a lifeline.

Every individual should have the right to choose if, when, and how they receive care, **including minors.** Youth deserve autonomy and self-determination in their mental health services, especially when they may be facing unsafe or abusive environments.

I respectfully ask you to consider my testimony and vote **NO** on HB 172. There is nothing more important than **protecting Ohio children from abuse and ensuring they have safe avenues to seek help.**

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Audrey Elszasz, Chardon, Ohio 44024