

Dear OHR Health Committee,

It is my understanding that the Ohio state government has a duty to protect and advocate for young people seeking mental health services. Ohio lawmakers are pushing HB 172, a bill that would repeal Ohio Revised Code 5122.04, a 36-year-old protection that allows youth ages 14–17 to access up to six mental health sessions or 30 days of care when a parent cannot or will not consent. This repeal would undo the protections for children who cannot involve parents or cannot reach parents with their mental health concerns, or need a short amount of time to experience mental health care before talking to their family. It is vital for young people to have access to these services as it is their right to access care like anyone else. ORC 5122.04 does not override mandated reporting, prescribe medication, or diminish the essential role of parents. Instead, it provides a safety net for vulnerable young people who would otherwise be left with no access to mental health support. The Ohio House of Representatives must vote NO on the passing of this bill or else many Ohio youth won't be able to access emergency mental health services.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Rachel Hong