

**House Health Committee**  
**Opponent Testimony for HB 172**  
**Darcy Messer, Student Social Work Intern**  
**November 17, 2025**

Chair Jean Schmidt, Vice Chair Kellie Deeter, Ranking Member Anita Somani and honorable Members of the House Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide opponent testimony on House Bill 172.

My name is Darcy Messer, and I am a social work student who is deeply committed to improving access to mental health care. I am strongly opposed to HB 172 because it would repeal Ohio Revised Code 5122.04, a protection that allows youth ages 14-17 to access up to six outpatient mental health sessions or 30 days of service when a parent or guardian cannot or will not consent to treatment. This law is not used frequently, but for those who are in unsafe situations with their parents or guardians or in situations where their guardians can't be reached this law makes a difference. There are youth who rely on it as a lifeline. As a future social worker and someone who grew up struggling with mental health, I understand how critical early and accessible care can really be. Many young people in similar situations do not have a safe, stable, or supportive home environment, and involving a parent can put them at further risk. Parents who dismiss or deny mental health needs because of stigma, a lack of understanding, or cannot be reached in time of a crisis are exactly why this law exists. This law is essential to help youth who are already isolated, scared and unsupported.

In social work we learn that early intervention saves lives, and the absence of care carries consequence. Without this law, vulnerable youth will be left to navigate their mental health and abuse alone. This can be devastating. Hb 172 does not strengthen families, it does not improve parental involvement. Instead, it strips away the helping hand to those who are already at risk of school dropout, substance use, and suicide. As someone who once needed support, I urge you to not take away one of the few avenues of help available to those who cannot safely rely on a parent or guardian.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I respectfully urge the committee to vote no on HB 172.