

HB 96 WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 05/12/2025

Name: Wyatt Wilcox, Student At Meadowdale Career Technology Center, reading for Makenzee Clark

Are you representing: Yourself **Organization**

Organization (If Applicable): Dayton Public Schools

Position/Title: Student

Address: 3873 Whitestone Court

City: State: Zip: Dayton, OH 45416

Best Contact Telephone: 937-903-5414 Email: kodonnell@daytonpublic.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? **Yes**

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): House Bill 96

Specific Issue: Youth Mental Health Funding

Are you testifying as a: **Interested Party**

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? **Yes**

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? **1-2 minutes**

Please provide a brief statement on your position: **The following testimony advocates for more funding for mental health resources for youth.**

Makenzee Clark: 'People need and deserve to be heard, seen, loved, respected, and supported'

I'm here reading testimony written by one of my classmates, Makenzee Clark. She's calling for more funding for mental health in the state budget, also known as House Bill 96. One warning: this testimony does talk about suicide.

Mental health needs to be talked about more often because it affects everyone's lives. Mental health is the reason why people deal with depression, anxiety, breakdowns, suicidal thoughts or plans, and it causes triggers and much more. Many people in the world hide the fact that they're struggling with poor mental health. People decide to stay silent and struggle because they think it's embarrassing or they don't want to be a burden towards others. In my opinion, no one should be hiding how they actually feel just to be ignored. Instead, people need and deserve to be heard, seen, loved, respected, and supported. I know how important mental health is because numerous people in my life have done tragic things, including self harm or even attempted suicide.

The sad thing about poor mental health is how people are giving up before they can get help. It isn't because they're weak and emotional; it's because they're emotionally tired and they've gone through so much in life to the point they really can't take anymore of the pain. But

those choices didn't solve their problems. Instead, it just made things worse for their families and their friends. There are so many reasons why these problems are happening, too: past experiences, trauma, stress, personal life, trust issues, deaths and other factors. If nothing is done about these problems, it will just get worse and more people will take their own lives.

To fix the problem, we need more people who are willing to actually listen and help us with our emotions and problems instead of judging, ignoring, dismissing, or just not having a concern. My idea is to rebuild and fix up an old building that would be used for affordable therapy and counseling for all ages. It should have at least one sensory room on every level of the building for if someone needs some time to calm down or take a break. I would also put sound canceling walls or acoustic foam panels in every room to block out the noise whether you're in a session or not. That way people can get the help and privacy they need. Most importantly, I would also hire professional therapists and counselors who are patient, kind, respectful and understanding, and who actually take the time to listen to our problems and help us. We will know our efforts are successful if people talk about how they feel more often and if suicide rates go down.

– *Mackenzee Clark is a junior at MCTC.*