

HB 96 WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 05/12/2025

Name: Errington Bozeman, Student At Meadowdale Career Technology Center

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.**

Errington Bozeman: We're Quiet for a Reason

I am kindly asking our representatives to address mental health in the upcoming state budget, House Bill 96. I want to start with the kids who are enrolled in our schools. When kids go home and have to experience their drunk parent or guardian. This problem can sometimes involve them getting hit and coming to school with bruises. When kids are put into situations like this they will most likely become depressed and will start falling back in school and will gain the disability of PTSD. Additionally, These things don't always go on when the guardian is intoxicated. They might just be upset and take it out on their kids, which is very traumatic.

According to The National Children's Alliance, there is an estimated number of 1,990 children under the age of 13 who passed away due to abuse and neglect in the United states. These kids don't even get the chance to experience the rest of their school years over a problem that could have been fixed. The challenges to the mental health caused by this abuse is something they will struggle for a long period of time and probably won't ever overcome.

Some of the things we can advocate for are Funding rehab facilities for the kids and their guardians. We could also start as low as talking and engaging in the kids more and building. Gain their trust so they will feel comfortable talking therefore they could begin the process of finding ways to help the child find coping skills. If we don't start taking mental health

seriously it can result in more deaths. It can also end with a lot of trauma in their future which could affect the way kids develop. We can also invest in more peer support groups so kids will have a variety of people to choose from or so they'll always have someone to talk to when one of our counselors are out.

When I come to school I see a lot of kids with their hoods up or crying in the bathroom cause they don't have anybody to talk to and have home problems and come to school and stress over grades is too much for them and they get overwhelmed. When I see stuff like that I think back to myself and how I was growing up cause me and my mom parents didn't have the best relationship like I wanted us to have. I start thinking of the ways I coped with things and try to get the advice I once used. I wish adults would notice when their kids are changed and try to gain a trusting relationship with them and not always blame them for stuff that they half of the time dont have any control over. Also we need adults to not always talk bad about the kids cause that doesn't always motivate them and make them wanna do better; it could make them think hard on why they are here and make them feel useless and make them wanna attempt. Also their rooms are dirty for a reason, they don't come out of their rooms for a reason, they get tattoos for a reason, they are quiet for a reason. So I am asking you to take mental health more seriously than it already is so the kids at my school or in our community can feel your support.