

Interested Party Testimony for House Bill 96

Senate Health Committee

Amy Humphrey

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Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of the Governor's proposal for the expansion of home visitation services in Ohio.

My name is Amy Humphrey. I am a resident of Hamilton County and serve as the Chief Deputy Auditor for the county. I am speaking to you today not as Chief Deputy, but in my most important role, as a mother and now grandmother, who benefited greatly from participation in the Every Child Succeeds (ECS) home visiting program. Every Child Succeeds is a Help Me Grow Home Visiting provider.

It was about 25 years ago that I became aware of the ECS program. I was introduced to it through the hospital where I delivered my daughter. I was a 22-year-old, single, low-income mom. I was isolated, insecure, and uncertain about my future. The people closest to me at the time could only see my current situation. Nobody knew how to guide me through it, much less how to help me grow and thrive. Margie became my home visitor, and we had 56 home visits together between the time I enrolled in the program and graduation when my daughter, Sidney, turned three years old.

I reached out to ECS about a year ago when I came across them on Linked In. Finding the organization brought back a rush of positive memories. I emailed them a thank you because they had impacted the trajectory of my life, my child's life, and the life of my family. I was so pleased to see that ECS was still helping prenatal moms and parents of children, ages 0-3 which we know is the most important period of development.

ECS gave me the confidence I lacked as a first-time mother. Margie brought activities to promote Sidney's development and administered screenings to let me know she was meeting her developmental milestones. The relationship with Margie and the nonjudgmental support she provided helped me believe in myself and understand that even if I wasn't perfect, I

was still a great mom! I was so fortunate to have a guide, a coach, and a cheerleader through ECS! Those 56 visits built a base for me that supported success.

The confidence I gained through the program helped me to see myself in a different light. I developed the strength to be the person that not only my daughter deserves, but who I deserve to be for myself and our future. I graduated from the ECS program and went on to earn my Bachelor's, obtain my real estate appraisal license, and in 2018, earn my MPA. I have worked at the Hamilton County Auditor's Office for almost 15 years.

While I am proud of the ways that I have grown; what is most important is that my daughter has thrived. I believe the program set the foundation for her success. Sidney is currently the General Manager of the Goodwill store in Bellevue, KY, and one of the youngest professionals in a leadership position there. She continues to challenge herself through business and leadership courses and I am so proud of her dedication to work and to make a positive impact in the community.

Finally, I now serve as part of the recently formed Every Child Succeeds Ambassador group. This group consists of moms who have graduated from the program. We champion the program in the community and advocate for support for parents during the most critical time of child development, prenatal to age three. It's hard to admit when you need help, but having resources like ECS, made possible by Help Me Grow Home Visiting, is essential for moms and babies to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your time today. I hope you will support this program that sets up two generations, parents and children, for long-term success. Please support Amendment SC0458 to restore the Governor's proposed funding for statewide home visitation services.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.