

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 174
THE OHIO STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

By Ohio Bar CEO Mary Amos Augsburger
Senate Judiciary Committee
Nov. 5, 2025

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, on behalf of the Ohio State Bar Association (“OSBA”), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 174. We are grateful to Senator Gavarone, Senator Hicks-Hudson, and all members of the Senate Judiciary Committee for your thoughtful consideration of this bill – a culmination of more than two decades of study, work, discussion, and compromise amongst many interested parties that will fundamentally reform our family law system and make it work better for all involved. We urge its passage.

This bill recognizes that while all cases are unique and all families are different, any legal process that allocates parenting functions and responsibilities should be rightly centered on the best interests of children.

There is no disagreement that establishing and maintaining a parent-child relationship is of fundamental importance to the welfare of a child. As such, SB174 prescribes that through the development of individualized parenting plans, our family courts will facilitate positive and meaningful relationships between a child and both parents by seeking to ensure those parents share equally in the responsibilities of raising their child and by maximizing the child’s time with both parents.

As it stands, much work and compromise has gone into the bill before you today and we support the majority of the amendments adopted in response to the testimony you have heard over the course of many hearings. However, we remain concerned that ongoing focus on the term “parental rights” continues to distract from the primary goal of the bill, which, as recommended by the Ohio Task Force on Family Law and Children created by the 122nd General Assembly, is to ensure that the best interests of the *children* are paramount in any parenting plan adopted by an Ohio court in the future. We hope there will be an opportunity to continue this discussion as the bill moves to the Ohio House.

Thank you once again for your support in advancing SB174.