

HARRISON COUNTY PROBATE / JUVENILE COURT

100 West Market Street – Courthouse

Cadiz, Ohio 43907

FAX: (740) 942-8483

MATTHEW P. PUSKARICH, JUDGE

LISA LIUNI
Chief Deputy Probate Clerk
PH: (740) 942-8868



SHELLY SHEPOSH
Chief Deputy Juvenile Clerk
PH: (740) 942-8862

March 31, 2015

Representative Ryan Smith
77 S. High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Representative Smith:

I am writing on behalf of the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges to express our support of the proposed Fiscal Year 2016-2017 budget for the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) in H.B. 64. This budget includes funding for community capacity and programming through RECLAIM Ohio, Youth Services Grant, the 12 Community Corrections Facilities, Targeted RECLAIM, Competitive RECLAIM and the Behavioral Health / Juvenile Justice initiative. These areas of community funding are essential for county juvenile courts to have the resources required to meet the diverse and increasing needs of Ohio's youth.

Funding for these community initiatives has contributed to a strong local/state partnership in Ohio's juvenile justice system, leading to significant reforms related to how treatment and services are delivered to the youth in our state. The impact of these reforms is supported by a number of measures. DYS provides funding to more than 600 programs annually, ranging from community-based diversion and intervention services to residential treatment for high-need youth. As we have seen the community capacity for serving youth expand, we have seen a stark decline in the number of youth adjudicated for felony offenses from more than 10,000 in FY 2000 to less than 4,700 in FY 2014. Subsequently, we have seen a decline in DYS population from more than 1,800 youth in FY 2007 to fewer than 500 today.

We look forward to continued partnership with DYS as we move forward. If you have any questions or I can provide more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew P. Puskarich".

Judge Matthew P. Puskarich
President OAJCJ

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF JUVENILE COURT JUDGES

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