



April 1, 2015

The Honorable Ryan Smith
Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High Street
13th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Representative Smith,

I am writing to you today in support of H.B. 64, particularly the provisions relative to the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS). DYS' proposed budget wholeheartedly supports the agency's mission to improve Ohio's future by habilitating youth and empowering families and communities. As a Clermont County Commissioner (27 years) and also the Appointed Chairman of the RECLAIM Advisory Committee, I can attest to the outstanding programs and initiatives available in our communities through DYS. I have had the honor of being involved with RECLAIM since 1994 and have chaired the RECLAIM Ohio's Advisory Committee since 2003.

DYS funds and supports more than 600 community programs throughout the state offering 80,000 youth opportunities and services to affect positive change. These services range from prevention and diversion programs to residential and community treatment. The department also awards prevention grants, provides significant subsidies to counties and fully funds 12 Community Corrections Facilities. Every dollar spent of RECLAIM programming saves up to \$57.51 as compared to placement in a Community Correctional Facility or DYS Facility, and enables that youth to remain in their respective community.

DYS has worked aggressively to reform the institutional operations, as well as expand services in our communities to ensure the most effective intervention for Ohio's youth involved in the juvenile justice system. While there is much to celebrate at DYS, there is still work to be done, such as expanding educational and employment opportunities for youth when they reenter their communities and reducing the three-year recidivism rates.

The Ohio Department of Youth Services is working hard to keep youth, families, and our communities safe. I respectfully appeal to you to fund this agency's budget request so that reform efforts can continue, leading to a brighter, more productive future for our youth and, consequently, for the great state of Ohio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert L. Proud".

Robert L. Proud
Vice President
Board of County Commissioners
Clermont County Ohio