



KNOX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB & FAMILY SERVICES

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Testimony by Matthew Kurtz, Director of Knox County Department of Job and Family Services and President of Public Children Services Association of Ohio Board of Directors

Ohio Senate

Finance Committee

June, 9, 2015

Chairman Beagle, Vice Chair Williams and members of Senate Finance thank you for your time today. I am Matthew Kurtz, Director of Knox County Department of Job & Family Services and President of the Public Children Service Association of Ohio.

A call comes into a Public Children Services Agency (PCSA) in the middle of the night and is screened for possible abuse or neglect. A child protection caseworker on call is informed that she must go out and investigate the situation. As the “first responder” to child safety, the caseworker knocks on a door of a dilapidated apartment. What exists on the other side of the door is what keeps all child protection workers, supervisors, and directors awake every night. One wrong word, one sudden movement, and there could be serious risk to the child, other individuals in the home, or even the caseworker’s life. Our child protection caseworkers witness traumatic scenes that many of us will never have to experience nor have lasting images engraved in our memories: cigarette burns all over a child’s body; a limp infant who has been shaken to the point of brain damage; a toddler crawling over drug paraphernalia on the floor; parents screaming threats as their children are being walked out of the home; gunshot holes in the wall above a child’s bed. And these are the innocent, vulnerable children we serve on a daily basis.

Despite these demanding situations, since 2009, funding for Child Protection has decreased dramatically (see Attachment). This decrease comes from two fronts.

First, cuts in State GRF have represented an almost \$14 million impact on county child protection agencies. Currently, the State of Ohio only provides 9% of the funding for Child Protection in Ohio. The remaining 91% comes from Federal and Local Sources at 39% and 52% respectively. That makes Ohio 50th in the nation for state support of child protection. Nationally, the average investment from states is 43%, with only 11% from local funds.

Second, losses from the Tangible Personal Property Tax phase out have amounted to almost \$40 million to Children Services Levies. So that is \$53 million in cuts. With another \$17 million expected to be lost with the final phase out of TPPT proposed in the Governor's budget that would be nearly \$70 million less in our system than in 2009.

Sadly, these reductions have come at a time when the demands on our agencies have been increasing in both number and intensity. The ongoing increase in drug abuse, that has reached epidemic numbers among opiate users, has caused ours to be a system on the verge of crisis. When you hear about heroin overdoses, meth lab raids and other drug offenses, more often than not those involved are parents of young children. Those children, at best, need our care while their parents put their lives back together. Ultimately, for many children our agencies must find them new families.

This is why we are requesting \$20 million in each year of the State Fiscal Year 16-17 budget. We would request that the additional funds be distributed in two segments. First, we would like to see an additional \$100,000 added to the base allocation for every county. This \$8.8 million would help to address the disparate funding between counties that have a children services levy and those that don't; and would assist in addressing significant workforce gaps in public children services agencies. The increase of \$100,000 would allow our child protection agencies to add additional staff to provide the Child and Family Centered Case management that is so crucial to our success. We would request that the remaining \$11.2 million be allocated via the State Child Protection Allocation formula. This additional state funding would allow county Child Protection Agencies to continue to intervene in the lives of Ohio's most precious resource; our children and allow us to focus on increasing permanency for their lives as a forever family is necessary for one's success in adulthood.

Some of the value of having more state funding is that it allows us to be flexible in our approach to the issues in a family. Recently, we had a mom who was working on staying drug free and had recently been reunited with her children. Her children had been removed for some months while she was in treatment. Her caseworker at our agency was following up her regularly and swab testing her as documentation that she was working her plan. She also had the support of a caseworker at our local Drug and Alcohol Counseling Center Weekly and through other local funding she had the assistance of a family aide who was there a few times a week to assist with household challenges and be a life coach of sorts to mom. These caseworkers along with mom's probation officer and the children's mental health counselor all sit down weekly to be sure that mom and family are on track. Though I can't guarantee you that mom will not relapse, I do feel that we have all the supports to be sure mom has all the opportunity to succeed or know if the safety of the children are at risk. This situation is only possible because my agency and the Mental

Health agency have levy funding that provide these needed workers to support this family. Many county agencies are not in the same position and are stretched just to meet timeframes with investigating allegations. So you see why additional funding to the system is so crucial.

One final comment, my combined agency also is responsible for Adult Protective Services, so I wanted to thank you for the additional \$10 million for that program as well as for the additional \$10 million for Child Protection in the last MBR. The Adult Protection funds are allowing all our agencies to build a stronger foundation for our Adult Protective Services programs. The challenge going forward will be to meet the increased demand that continues as the number of Ohio seniors continues to grow. The \$3.2 million included in Governor's '16 & '17 budget will be completely washed away by loses Senior Levies will experience through the TPPT loss. So we are again looking at a system that is stressed by increasing need and eroding funding. Sadly, the additional \$10 million for Child Protection in the MBR was not distributed in a way that allowed all agencies to address permanency. It was, rather, distributed by a grant program that funded only 57 of 76 applications not having nearly the broad reaching effect for which we had hoped.

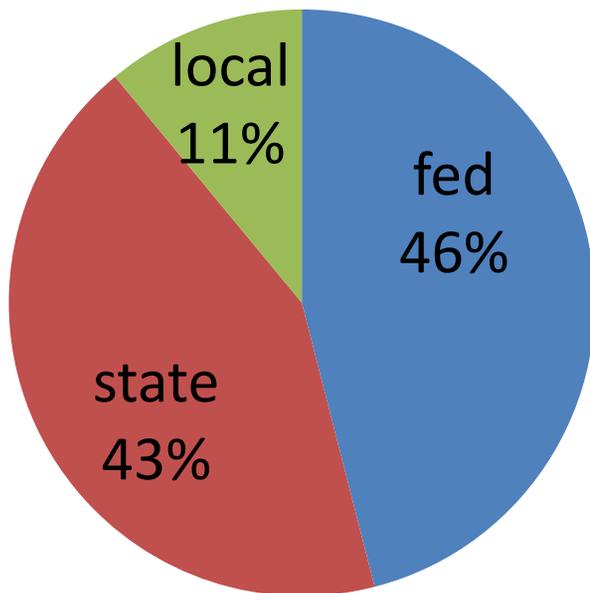
It is time to invest in our first responders, not make child protection the last resort, and begin to build a foundation at the State for child protection to ensure that all children are safe with permanent, lifelong families.

I am pleased to have with me today, three other presenters to tell you more about child protection priorities. First is Amanda Dulap, a former foster child, with her story of how permanency in an adoptive home opened the doors to the successful life she now lives. Also, we have Julie Barnes, Director of Summit County Children Services to tell you about a Multi System Youth Work Group to study the impact that children coming into our system from the Mental Health, Development Disabilities and Correctional systems are having on child protection. Wrapping up our panel will be Gayle Channing Tenenbaum to talk about the Behavioral Health Care Carve-In to Managed Care and its impact to children in our system.

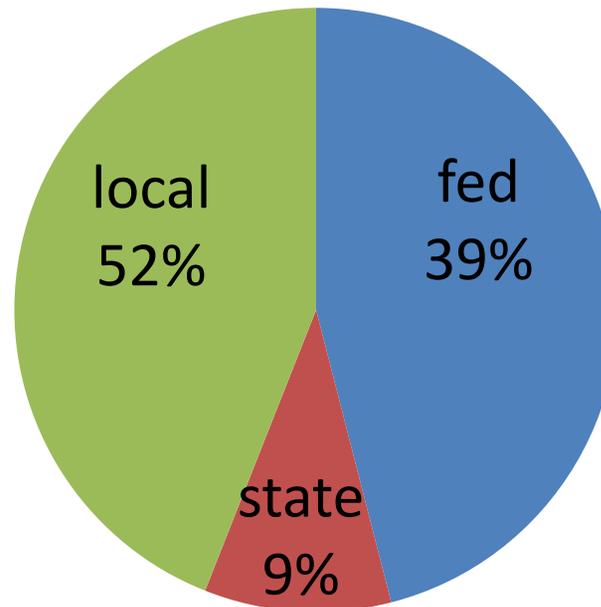


CHILD PROTECTION FUNDING

National



Ohio





OHIO CHILD PROTECTION FUNDING

<u>\$1,006,793,629</u>	—————→	Total Cost
\$394,131,470	—————→	Federal (39%)
\$518,993,007	—————→	Local (52%)
\$93,670,643	—————→	State (9%)

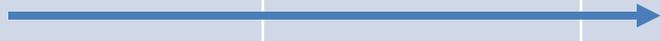


- 9% of the total cost of child protection is State funding but not all goes to county PCSAs
 - **4.7% (\$44,241,433) is for direct services via county PCSAs**
 - 5.3% (\$49,429,210) is for statewide efforts: Adoption Subsidies, SACWIS, trainings, other



LOSS OF STATE FUNDING SPECIFICALLY FOR CHILD PROTECTION

Fiscal Year	2009	2014	Loss
State Child Protection Allocation	\$57,723,143	\$43,905,320	- \$13,817,823
TPP for Children Services Levies	\$52,139,746	\$12,374,183	- \$39,765,563
TOTAL	\$109,862,889	\$56,279,503	- \$53,583,386





- **48.7% reduction in state funding** (SCPA & TPPT) from 2009 – 2013
- BUT Child Protection Custody Cases have NOT reduced, but **INCREASED by 8%** and are more difficult (opiates, human trafficking, high multi-system needs like mental health and DD)
 - 1/1/10: 11,721 children in custody
 - 1/1/14: 12,679 children in custody



TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED IN 2013

250,000+ calls of child abuse/neglect



100,139 screened-in reports investigated or assessed

79,110 Traditional Response

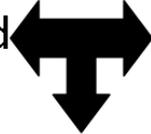


21,029 Alternative Response



12,679 children in out-of-home care

7,555 reunified



835 emancipated

2,519 children available for adoption



1,300 children adopted



INVEST IN CHILD PROTECTION

\$20 Million increase to the State Child Protection Allocation

- \$8.8M allocated equally to all 88 counties
- \$11.2M allocated via the SCPA formula to all counties with a focus on improving permanency outcomes

(SCPA Formula: 12% divided equally among all counties; 48% distributed based on total number of children under 18; 40% based on poverty level)