



**Department of
Youth Services**

**Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS)
Testimony of Deputy Director Ryan Gies
House State and Local Government Committee
February 23, 2017**

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chairman Hambley, Ranking Member Bischoff and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, my name is Ryan Gies. I am the Deputy Director of Parole, Courts and Community for the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS). I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of DHS and Director Harvey Reed in support of the RECLAIM Advisory Committee.

As you may be aware, RECLAIM (Reasoned and Equitable Community and Local Alternatives to the Incarceration of Minors) Ohio is a funding initiative that encourages juvenile courts to provide a range of community-based options, and it has contributed to a reduction in the DHS population from well over 2,000 youth in the early 1990s to fewer than 500 today. By diverting youth from DHS facilities, courts have the opportunity to invest RECLAIM funds locally. This statutory sharing of funding between DHS and county juvenile courts has created a unique state-local partnership that promotes youth receiving services in the most appropriate setting, very often in their home communities.

The RECLAIM Advisory Committee, which has been in place since 2003 when a sweeping funding change was passed, evaluates RECLAIM and advises the state on matters related to funding levels and statutes, including the formula by which DHS allocates dollars to courts. The committee members—who represent juvenile court judges, court administrators and county commissioners, in addition to state legislators, the Office of Budget and Management, and DHS—provide input based on community needs and trends in juvenile justice.

The committee's role is critical in RECLAIM's success in that it provides an autonomous body, composed of stakeholders, to monitor and critique the program. It also provides a conduit back to the associations of the juvenile court judges and county commissioners, as well as to the state legislature, among other groups. This level of transparency and community involvement keeps the RECLAIM partnership working for both the state and the counties.

Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chairman Hambley, Ranking Member Bischoff and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to address any questions you may have.