



**Ohio Senate Finance Committee
House Bill 49 Testimony
Ohio Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs
May 31, 2017**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chairwoman Manning, Ranking Member Skindell, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. Today, I have the privilege of appearing before you as both the CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Columbus and as a Board Member of the Ohio Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs. I am here to testify on behalf of the Ohio Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, to thank you for your support, update you on the impact that our Clubs are having throughout the state, and respectfully, request your support of the TANF Block Grant funding for the Ohio Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs included in the House version of the budget bill.

First, I would like to applaud Governor Kasich and the entire General Assembly for making children a top priority in this budget. The Boys & Girls Clubs throughout Ohio represent nearly 50,000 kids at 62 sites. Since the founding of our first Club in Ohio more than 100 years ago, our organization has grown its footprint and impact over the past century and today plays a critical role in helping children succeed. Our focus on providing programming during “out-of-school time” helps communities bridge the gap between school and home and ensures that our kids have access to programs and mentors that will challenge them to achieve in school, develop a strong moral compass and make healthy lifestyle choices. We offer these programs to our youth at a cost of \$5-\$10 per school year to become a member of a Club. We are able to keep this cost to our members so low due to the support

we receive from communities, foundations, businesses, and a small but critical amount of funding from government sources.

We understand that this committee and the legislature are carefully examining ways to strengthen our state's response to the opioid crisis that is devastating communities across Ohio. We wanted to share with you today some of the ways that Ohio's Boys & Girls Clubs are on the front lines when it comes to the opioid epidemic. Our Clubs are providing a safe, positive environment for youth whose parents or guardians are struggling with addiction in many high-need areas of the state. Additionally, Clubs are providing critical healthy lifestyles programs to our youth which emphasize drug use prevention education. In fact, in 2016 the leaders of the Ohio General Assembly and Attorney General Mike DeWine created the Ohio Joint Study Committee on Drug Use Prevention Education, which issued a report in February of this year that recommends supporting Boys & Girls Clubs because they provide a safe, positive place for kids to spend their non-school hours and include programming, nutritious meals, academic support, and the Smart Moves program, which focuses on drug and alcohol prevention and healthy lifestyles.¹

Our Clubs' healthy lifestyles programs are proving to be effective, as demonstrated by results from the 2016 National Youth Outcomes Initiative Survey of Clubs teens, which uses the same set of questions used by the Center for Disease Control in their 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). In comparing data from the two surveys, we saw the following differences:

- percentage of Ohio's **Club teens who abstain from smoking cigarettes is 11 per cent greater than average Ohio teens**
- percentage of Ohio's **Club teens who abstain from drinking alcohol is 20 per cent greater than average Ohio teens**

¹ *Ohio Joint Study Committee on Drug Use Prevention Education, 9-10, 2017*
www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Publications-Files/Publications-for-Schools/Ohio-Joint-Study-Committee-on-Drug-Use-Prevention

- percentage of Ohio's Clubs teens who abstain from taking illicit prescription drugs is 11 per cent greater than average Ohio teens
- percentage of Ohio's Club teens who abstain from smoking marijuana is seven per cent greater than average Ohio teens

In addition to our healthy lifestyles programs, Ohio's Clubs also deliver academic programming to our youth. With state funding included by the legislature in the last two biennial budgets, Ohio's Clubs have implemented the **Boys & Girls Clubs Academic Success Program**. As a result of this funding, the Boys & Girls Clubs throughout Ohio have reached the most vulnerable in our state and made a significant impact that improves lives, benefits thousands of communities across the state, and is cost-efficient.

Youth who attend a Boys & Girls Club in Ohio have access to the full range of out-of-school-time programming that Clubs provide including homework help, meals, athletics and character development activities. Under the Academic Success Program, TANF-eligible youth have been driven to participate in programs that promote academic success and wellness. Some examples of that programming include:

- 1) *Power Hour* - homework help, tutoring and learning activities
- 2) *Summer Brain Gain* - a comprehensive curriculum of project-based learning activities designed to combat the summer learning loss that is experienced by most low-income youth over the summer break
- 3) *SMART Girls* - a small-group health, fitness, prevention/education and self-esteem enhancement program designed to meet the developmental needs of girls
- 4) *Passport to Manhood* - promotes and teaches responsibility in Club boys through targeted discussions and activities that reinforce positive behavior

These programs are having an impact on the youth we serve, which is illustrated by data collected from Ohio Boys & Girls Clubs through the National Youth Outcomes Initiative, or NYOI. NYOI is our tool for measuring the impact of the Clubs in a consistent manner using a common set of research-informed indicators of Clubs' priority outcomes. This data shows that from 2012 to 2014, the **percentage of Club members who are on grade level for their age increased from 85-90 percent**. Additionally, the number of Ohio's Club youth who expect to participate in post-secondary education increased by **3 percentage points – more than 1,300 children**. The percent of Club youth who successfully **obtained summer employment increased from 58-67 percent** during this time period.

Data about Club Members' overall experience is also reported through the National Youth Outcomes Initiative. **Sixty-four percent of Ohio's Club youth said that the Club is the safest place in their community**. Nearly sixty percent of Club youth reported getting the Centers for Disease Control's recommended 60 minutes of physical activity per day, which is more than twice the national average among youth ages 6-18. In short, Boys & Girls Clubs are not just delivering programs – we are delivering results.

Since the Ohio General Assembly began investing in Boys & Girls Clubs, the Clubs have mastered leveraging resulting in the collective statewide revenues of Clubs growing 20 percent, with investment from private sources growing at a rate of 16 percent per year. These figures indicate that Ohio's Clubs are utilizing the government dollars to effectively leverage private and foundation resources to continue growing our programs around the state to the meet the high demand for our services.

Over the course of the past four years, Boys & Girls Clubs have opened 17 new sites throughout the state to meet the needs of communities during those after-school hours when access to literacy programming, mentoring, sports, and an environment that nurtures self-esteem and hope makes all the difference in determining each child's future. Because the need is so dire, we need sufficient funds to provide these services and therefore, we respectfully request your support of the line item included by the Ohio House of

Representatives within the TANF Block Grant section of the bill. The House version of the budget bill includes \$1,000,000 per fiscal year for the Ohio Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs to provide after-school and summer programs that protect at-risk children and enable youth to become responsible adults. This funding does not impact GRF funds, but rather uses federal dollars to provide Ohio's youth with the best opportunities to become productive, successful adults.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I will now invite a Boys & Girls Club youth member, Alexis Lester, to join me at the podium to share her story of how the Clubs have impacted her life.

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