



2/19/19

Chairman Burke, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, my name is Jill Kingston and I am the Executive Director of Brigid's Path.

I am writing to share my support for Senate Bill 6, which would define and further regulate "host families", as well as provide resources and services to assist, support, and educate parents, host families, children, or any person hosting a child under a host family agreement on a temporary basis.

Brigid's Path is one piece of the opioid addiction "solution puzzle" in the Dayton, Ohio area. Brigid's Path is a newborn recovery center that allows babies born drug-exposed to withdraw in a home-like setting with inpatient level high quality medical care. We provide strengths-based supportive and life-skill building services to the families of babies we serve, and we encourage moms and dads to participate in their babies' lives, which is critical to bonding and long-term family success.

Unlike a hospital neonatal intensive care unit, where babies with neonatal abstinence syndrome ("NAS") typically withdraw, Brigid's Path can keep baby until mom and dad are ready to take baby home, or until a suitable kinship or foster care placement has been arranged. Our primary goal at Brigid's Path is to ensure the wellbeing of the babies we serve, and their families. Ideally, once a baby is weaned from the drugs in their system, he or she can go home with one or both parents or, if that is not a suitable situation, with a family member. We want to keep families intact whenever possible. We know this is in the best interest of the baby and the parents. We want the best placement for baby the first time (ideally with mom, dad, or another biological family member), and long-term success for the child/parent relationship.

We also recognize that sometimes mom, dad, or a kinship placement is not available or appropriate when baby is ready to leave Brigid's Path. In this instance, and to avoid a placement in foster care, sending baby home with a host family may be best. One of the greatest success stories to come out of Brigid's Path involves the services of a host family. Ashley, one of the moms whose babies received services at Brigid's Path, brought her baby to Brigid's Path when the baby was just one week old. The baby received services for 2 months, and, during this time, mom received strengths based supportive services from Brigid's Path, too. Mom also worked on her recovery. Though she made remarkable progress while baby was at Brigid's Path, mom wasn't quite ready to take baby home when baby was discharged from Brigid's Path. Working with Children's Services, it was decided that baby should go home to a host family while mom continued to work on her recovery and skill-building. Mom played a vital role in the life of her baby – taking baby to doctor's appointments, feeding and bathing her, etc. – while baby lived with the host family. Today, mom has been clean for a year and was just reunited with her baby.

These kinds of success stories are possible when settings like host families exist and are appropriately regulated. For this reason, I support passage of Senate Bill 6.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill Kingston". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill Kingston
Executive Director