



Ohio Senate
Health, Human Services, and Medicaid Committee

October 15, 2019

Proponent Testimony on HB 8

Witness: Greg Thompson, Ohio Executive State Director, Necco

Chairman Burke, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 8.

My name is Greg Thompson, and I am the Ohio Executive State Director for Necco. I am here today to offer testimony in support of House Bill 8.

For those of you not familiar with Necco, we are an Ohio based company with current operations in four states. Within Ohio, Necco has foster care and behavioral health locations in Cincinnati, Dayton, South Point, and soon to be Columbus. Additionally, we have a 60-bed residential facility, The Necco Center, for boys ages 9-22 with an intellectual delay and a dual diagnosis in Pedro, OH. Necco Ohio currently serves over 400 foster youth, a thousand outpatient children and families, and nearly 60 boys at The Center at any given time. This is accomplished with 400 employees, 250 plus foster families, and our back-office staff located at our corporate office in Cincinnati.

Being a multi-state child welfare company gives Necco the opportunity to look at these issues on a national level and identify practices that reduce waiting and trauma for children in care. We believe House Bill 8 represents one of those practices by streamlining training of interested families

HB 8 helps potential foster parents by removing some of the most strict and difficult requirements on becoming a foster caregiver in the country from the revised code. By placing the responsibility of redesigning these requirements in the hands of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, not only will it be easier to become a foster parent, but the training topics and material will be more updated and relevant. The more families that are available to match with children in care translates most importantly to less trauma for the foster child, quicker permanency and ultimately a cost savings.



In addition to supporting HB 8 as it currently stands, I hope you will consider adding a small amendment that will remove the 2-year recertification requirement from code, also giving this discretion to ODJFS to adjust. This will help align both the recruitment and retention of foster parents with HB 8's intended goals of helping Ohio to adjust and better care for the growing child welfare population. For foster parents, the paperwork can be taxing. We want foster parents focused on the children in their homes. We have staff in the homes continuously. Any changes need to be addressed organically while working with the family and documented as appropriate. Ohio is also misaligned with border states of KY, WV, PA, and IN, all of whom have recertification periods of at least 3 years, with Indiana only requiring licensed foster parents to recertify every 4 years.

Chairman Burke and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of this important legislation. I am happy to answer any questions.

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