

Barbara Ward

Proponent Testimony- House Bill 65

February 5, 2020

Hello Chairman Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee. I am honored to speak with you today about House Bill 65 and why it is so important to me and my family.

My name is Barbara Ward and I am the proud mom of Chase. Chase is a 8-year-old boy who loves Legos, telling knock-knock jokes and recess at school. He is a cub scout and is learning to play lacrosse. It feels like a lifetime ago that he was a small two year-old toddler that was found alone on a busy street in Westerville. But he was. His daycare not only failed to perform several headcounts, but also waited three days to notify the state as well as my husband and I.

Despite everything that went wrong that day back in August of 2013, my husband and I know we were lucky. We were lucky that he was found safe. We were lucky that the passerby who found him not only returned him to his school, but called to report the negligence. We were lucky that during the investigation process we were kept informed and ultimately decided to remove our child from this particular center's care.

The same can't be said for the parents of the other children enrolled at this center. I was shocked when I found out that the owner did not have to disclose what happened to Chase under her care to the other parents of enrolled students. While it is true these parents could go and read the same investigation report that I read online, how would they have known to look for it? They didn't know something so serious had happened.

House Bill 65 is what bridges that gap. Parents will be informed and pointed to the ODJFS website so they can read an investigation report that they may never have known was out there. They would then have the critical information necessary to make educated decisions about their child's care. I truly think House Bill 65 would make a difference to parents like myself.

My goal has always been to give all parents the ability to educate themselves about the center they choose to trust with their child's care and I believe House Bill 65 accomplishes just that.

Members of this committee, thank you again for allowing me the time to provide my proponent testimony today, I am happy to answer any questions you may have for me.