



State Representative Cindy Abrams
State Representative Mike Loychik
Sponsor Testimony - House Bill 92
House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee
February 18, 2021

Rep. Cindy Abrams

Chair Manchester, Vice-Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 92. This bill is a re-introduction of House Bill 558 from the last General Assembly, which received unanimous support from of the House Criminal Justice Committee and House Chamber yet ran out of time to cross the finish line in the Senate.

A top priority for the Department of Defense, this key legislation aims to take care of our military families in Ohio. If enacted, this bill would require Public Children's Services Agencies to report child abuse or neglect in military families to the appropriate military authorities.

Current Department of Defense Policy requires the Military Services to establish a Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with state and local child welfare services to collaborate on the oversight of cases involving military families. This is to ensure children and their families are getting the support they need, and can be connected to any and all available resources.

However, county welfare agencies and may not have authority or direction to collect confidential information or share it with the appropriate authorities. This hinders the ability of both parties to follow the collaboration agreements set in the MOU.

House Bill 92 simply and straightforwardly solves this incongruence by requiring a public children services agency to determine if a parent, guardian, or custodian of a child subject to a child abuse or neglect investigation is in the Armed Forces and, if so, gives them the authority and direction to notify the appropriate authority of that Armed Force that an investigation is being made.

This common-sense bill will allow for better coordination of local child welfare and military protective and rehabilitative services, and more consistent following of MOUs.

I will allow my colleague and joint sponsor, Representative Loychik, to further explain why House Bill 92 is so crucial for supporting our military families in Ohio.

Rep. Mike Loychik

During my time in the Air Force, I saw firsthand the disconnect that can happen between child welfare and the military.

This legislation will help to clear that up. By requiring that PCSAO's notify military authorities at the time an investigation is being made, we are ensuring that everyone gets the help and resources they need as soon as possible. This will prevent any problems from boiling over and becoming larger issues later down the line.

We should be doing all we can to ensure child welfare and make it a top priority of this state. This legislation is a great step towards that, and I ask for your support in helping our military families and children get the resources they need.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 92. We are happy to answer any questions the Committee may have at this time.