

## **19<sup>th</sup> House District**

Parts of NE Franklin County  
Including Columbus, Gahanna,  
New Albany, Westerville, Minerva Park,  
and area townships



## **134<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Committees**

Energy and Natural Resources  
Health  
Higher Education and Career Readiness  
Primary & Secondary Education  
Technology and Innovation, Ranking Member

### **Representative Mary Lightbody 19<sup>th</sup> House District**

Testimony to the Health Committee  
House Bill 474  
February 15, 2022  
Mary Lightbody, Ph.D.

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Liston, and fellow members of the House Health Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify in support of House Bill 474, which would designate the third Friday of November as "The Night We Remember" in honor of all people whose lives have been touched by cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society, about 73,320<sup>1</sup> Ohioans were newly diagnosed with cancer in 2021. This disease touches these individuals, their families, their caregivers and our communities. The Night We Remember will be an opportunity to pause and remember loved ones and uplift those currently facing cancer. This day will celebrate men, women, and children actively battling cancer, the parents of children actively battling cancer, loved ones who battled cancer, and loved ones whose cancer battles have ended.

This legislation was inspired by Mary Jenkins, who is a breast cancer survivor and the founder of the COC, an organization based in Franklin County which provides direct support to those facing cancer. The COC was formerly known as "Christians Overcoming Cancer" and now stands for the "Cancer Options Collaborative." Mary Jenkins sought out an organization that would be able to provide the services that she needed while she was undergoing chemotherapy treatment. Seeing a gap in the services available to cancer patients, in 2006 she founded the COC in order to help cancer patients in active treatment succeed on their road to recovery through awareness, emotional support and financial relief services to prevent eviction, utility disconnects, vehicle repossessions, and more. This nonprofit organization began initially serving others in Central Ohio and has grown to assist people in all 50 states and has provided referrals throughout the world.

When I met with Mary last summer, I was touched by her resilience and how she used her personal experience with cancer to create an organization which cared for others facing the disease. I hope that you will schedule the next hearing soon so that we can hear directly from her.

The COC began to observe the Night We Remember as a chance for families to gather before Thanksgiving in order to pause and honor their loved ones who are battling or have battled cancer. HB 474 would expand this initiative to a statewide commemoration in Ohio.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://cancerstatisticscenter.cancer.org/#!/state/Ohio>

In Ohio, March is designated as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month (ORC 5.2219), May is designated as Melanoma and Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month (ORC 5.2246) and Brain cancer awareness month (ORC 5.2313), June is designated as Prostate Cancer Awareness Month (ORC 5.2217), September is designated as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month (ORC 5.2255) and Childhood Cancer Awareness Month (ORC 5.2254), October is designated as Breast Cancer Awareness Month with the third Thursday of each October designated as Ohio Mammography Day (ORC 5.2213), and October 13 is designated as Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day (ORC 5.2291). Codifying The Night We Remember alongside these other months and dates is an opportunity to unite all those who have faced cancer in the state of Ohio.

In the Technology and Innovation Committee, we heard a presentation from Dr. Rene Anand, the Founder, CEO of Neurxtem, a Research and Development lab in Heath, Ohio that studies the human brain in order to create early diagnostic tests for Brain Cancer, Alzheimer', Parkinson's' Disease, and even Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He explained that there are three factors that underlie most of the ailments that can threaten our health: genetic, environment, and nutrition. Presently, we can only address our environment and our nutrition. It is important to bring attention to actions that we can take to proactively prevent cancer by protecting environment from cancer causing chemicals and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to have a healthy diet.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I hope that you will support this legislation. I welcome your questions.

<><>