

WRITTEN TESTIMONY (PROPONENT) OF  
KIMBERLY I. LAUDICK, PRESIDENT/CEO YWCA OF VAN WERT COUNTY  
OHIO COUNCIL OF YWCAs  
BEFORE THE OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
REPRESENTATIVE BILL ROEMER, CHAIR  
H.B.110  
MARCH 3, 2021

Chair Roemer, Ranking Member West, and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. I am Kimberly I. Laudick, President/CEO of the YWCA of Van Wert County and a member of the Ohio Council of YWCAs. Our Council is made up of the 14 YWCA chapters across the State, and we are committed to our goals of eliminating racism and empowering women.

I am here to provide proponent testimony in favor of an amendment to H.B. 110, which would earmark \$3.5 million to support specific programming in YWCA chapters that provide direct services to women and children victimized by gender-based violence throughout the State, and to continue and expand community outreach through youth development and prevention programs. More specifically, the amendment would support Council programs that:

- Prevent domestic violence,
- Support victims of domestic violence,
- Provide trauma-informed services for survivors of domestic violence, and
- Support outreach and development opportunities through youth development and prevention programming.

These services would include emergency shelters, crisis hotline support and non-residential services. We provide wraparound services that address gender-based violence, including trauma-informed support for survivors such as counseling, case management, substance abuse services and prevention education in the community.

Our member organizations reached more than 90,000 women, girls and family members last year through our programming. Our current sources of funding include federal and private and sources, and the state in the last biennium also provided TANF funding to the Council so that we could meet ongoing needs of the communities and the vulnerable populations we serve, which was helpful. However, the amendment we support for requested funds will increase our ability to serve more individuals in need, improve program quality and increase the impact of those we serve. This past year's pandemic has uncovered an even higher demand for our services, and our members have borne the costs of increased demands for shelter, calls to domestic violence hotlines, essential workers, and sanitization and technology costs among other expenses. At least one member has had to house domestic violence victims in area hotels due to the increased demand and to mitigate COVID-19 concerns.

Each year, demand for the services we provide grows, as our programming is much vaster than the two areas for which we are seeking funding. Our major programs include subject matters that address human trafficking and gender violence prevention, as well as Women and Girls' empowerment, economic development, leadership, family development (including teen family development), health and wellness, senior community service, and racial justice and civil rights.

Our programs are curriculum based and outcome-centered, and we sustain active service partnerships and referral channels throughout our respective communities. In fact, YWCA chapters collectively partner and collaborate with over 45 school districts and alternative schools statewide for programming and after school care. Finally, we provide a variety of educational opportunities for youth as part of wrap-around services.

As a non-profit, most of our work allows us to be involved in our community. YWCA of Van Wert County is the primary comprehensive supportive living program serving Van Wert and the surrounding region. We provide safe, stable and supportive housing and intensive case management for women and families. We are dedicated to providing supportive services, group programming, service coordination, and access to resources to help each resident make positive life changes. The goal of the YWCA Victim Services Program is to empower those we serve to reclaim their lives and to become self-sufficient independent individuals who go on to live violence-free and successful lives. Also, YWCA of Van Wert County's Anti-Human Trafficking and Sexual Assault Services are dedicated to eradicating Human Trafficking in the forms of sexual, labor, and child trafficking as well as sexual assault of every kind.

Through our Youth Enrichment Program we are able to serve approximately 20,000 meals each year to the youth in our community for free. All children are able to participate in our Youth Enrichment Program, however YWCA targets low income families who are facing food insecurity – which in turn provides children with a basic need that is not being met elsewhere.

In addition, YWCA of Van Wert County has an Empowerment Resources Department. This brings exciting, new opportunities for women and children, as it relates to making one stronger and more confident – especially in claiming their rights. Available programming within this department includes outcome based curriculums. Through all of our trauma responsive programs and activities we are extremely involved in Van Wert County and we are very proud of the work we do in our community.

The requested funds would be a line-item appropriation in TANF Block Grant funding, which will not cost the state any General Revenue Funds as it is an allocation of federal pass-through dollars.

The Governor's proposed budget is a great start considering the substantial resources be devoted to areas in social services to protect the most vulnerable Ohioans in H.B.166. The amendment will improve the bill from because it demonstrates a clear commitment to support programming in organizations such as ours that are also on the front lines to address those we serve. We believe our funding request is consistent with that priority.

Chair Roemer, we urge the Subcommittee to favorably consider the amendment request. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.