

Ohio Chapter

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Testimony of Bill Cotton, MD, FAAP **Advocacy Co-Chair, OhioAAP** *HB 110 – State Operating Budget*

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 110, the State Operating Budget for Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023. I am here today on behalf of the nearly 3,000 members of the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Overall, we are very pleased with House Bill 110 and its potential impact on child health and wellness in Ohio. HB 110 continues many of the historic investments in Ohio's pediatric population made in the prior budget (HB 166, 133rd). This includes enhanced funding for health and wellness services in schools, support for lead abatement and tobacco cessation activities under the Ohio Department of Health, new investments in early intervention services, and funding to support critical changes at the Ohio Department of Medicaid.

HB 110 provides stable and adequate funding for several important child health programs. This includes the Children with Medical Handicaps program under the Ohio Department of Health and Ohio's Medicaid program. We are especially excited to see some of the new programs, such as OhioRISE, being implemented in the next 12 months. While HB 110 continues our commitment to Ohio children, there are some specific items I would like to highlight for your consideration.

Newborn Screenings

OhioAAP is supportive of a House-added provision that will modify the process for newborn screenings in Ohio. Specifically, this amendment added spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) and X-linked adrenoleukodystrophy (X-ADL) to the list of required screenings for Ohio newborns and sets a firm timeline for consideration of future

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recommended screenings by the Ohio Department of Health's Newborn Screening Advisory Committee. This will ensure babies receive the most up-to-date screenings that are included in the federal Recommended Uniform Screening Panel (RUSP).

Adoption by Legal Married Couples

House Bill 110, *as introduced*, included a provision modifying Ohio's adoption laws to align with recent court decisions and current practice. Currently, any legally married couple, including same-sex couples, are eligible to adopt. However, Ohio law still uses the term 'husband and wife', which is inconsistent with judicial rulings and current practice. The version of HB 110 passed by the Ohio House of Representatives removes 'legally married couple' and instead retains 'husband and wife'. OhioAAP feels that this causes unnecessary confusion and sends a negative message to same sex couples who wish to adopt. Further, use of the term 'legally married couple' is consistent with a 2013 policy statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics arguing that same sex couples should have full adoption rights and that children benefit from having two adopted parents regardless of gender.ⁱ

Eligibility for Child Care Services

OhioAAP strongly supports an amendment being developed that would increase eligibility for child care from 130% of the Federal Poverty Line to 150% FPL. Enrollment in subsidized childcare has declined during the COVID-19 pandemic, so this is even more necessary for stability and child development. Child care is essential for low income parents and families and this change will ensure more parents have access to quality care so they can work and support their family.

Postpartum Coverage for Pregnant Women

OhioAAP also supports efforts to extend coverage of postpartum care for pregnant woman and new mothers. Currently, pregnant women are eligible for 60 days of postpartum care under Medicaid; additionally, the Ohio Department of Medicaid is working on an 1115 waiver to extend postpartum care for mothers with substance abuse to 12 months. We strongly support this effort and also encourage the General Assembly to consider increasing postpartum care for all new mothers covered by Ohio Medicaid to 12 months.

In closing, I want to thank the members of this committee for their commitment to Ohio kids and their thoughtful review of House Bill 110. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

ⁱ <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/131/4/827>