



House Bill 110

Senate Health Committee
Chairman Huffman
Ranking Member Antonio
Members: Antani, Johnson, Roegner, Romanchuk, Thomas

Testimony submitted by:
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Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for allowing this testimony today. The Ohio Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs is the statewide voice of the 13 Club organizations operating over 60 Club sites in the state. Our shared mission across Ohio is to enable all young people, especially those that need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

As introduced and as passed by the Ohio House, House Bill 110 contains a line-item appropriation to Ohio Clubs of \$5M in federal pass through dollars each fiscal year via the TANF Block Grant program. We respectfully request that this line-item be protected and maintained in the final version of the state's operating budget.

Few times in our state's history has the need been greater. But, neither has our potential for positive impact. Ohio's kids are facing a daunting number of economic and social challenges exacerbated by the ongoing global pandemic. At the same time, 54% of Boys & Girls Club alumni say that the Clubs literally saved their lives.

Through our advocacy we espouse the tremendous impact Clubs can have in shrinking the academic achievement gap, creating a prepared workforce, and/or instilling and supporting healthy lifestyles for those we serve. Clubs offer amazing programming that can help Ohio socially and economically.

In response to the challenges of last year, youth suicide prevention programs were deployed. In-demand tech workforce-development partnerships were formed. And opioid prevention curriculum was implemented. When out-of-school time became synonymous with learning time, Clubs extended operations to provide a safe place for kids to learn and grow while everything else around them was restricted or inaccessible. Operating expenses have soared. Revenue has been lost. But service to those that need us the most has grown.

Administered by Jobs and Family Services, current funding requires programming for eligible youth in each of two focus areas. While this funding contractually underwrites only a portion of our served population, the impact of these dollars is felt on a broad scale. Each year Boys & Girls Clubs across Ohio open their doors to approximately 40,000 youth. Access to these resources is critical to program quality, Club operations, and continued community access as demand has reached its zenith.

This funding will provide for caring, professional staff that not only support these programs but create the loving, supportive environment that is the number one reason why kids come to Clubs in the first place. It will keep Clubs open in communities where they are needed most. It allows for increased teen services during out-of-school time where they are statistically more likely to engage in at-risk behavior.

This allocation is an investment in academic gains for underserved areas and a chance to stem a widening achievement gap. It is an investment in youth mental health and combating the state's staggering youth suicide rates. It is an investment toward economic growth supporting world-class workforce programs and documented return on investment for Ohio's communities. This allocation is an investment in saving lives and shaping great futures.

While asking for this investment, it should be noted that Clubs are cognizant of overreliance on any one funding stream, especially state investment. Clubs were not immune to the economic impact and philanthropic downturn of 2020 and TANF funding has proven vital to support continued operations. That being said, community support is the crux of our funding model. This raises two important points. 1) when evaluated against total Club projected operating income for the coming year, this investment (even at the increase amount of \$5M per fiscal year) equates to just slightly over 10% of total funding. The Alliance has received no direct or indirect allocation of federal relief funds during this time. 2) TANF dollars have proven a strong catalyst for growth and an important resource for sustainability across the state. We have found that for every dollar Clubs get from state government, it helps raise approximately four times that amount from the community, corporations, and private individuals.

With afterschool and summer options, Ohio Clubs can offer more hours of programming over the course of a year than public schools. Coupled with a national network of programming, measurement tools, and operational support, the Ohio Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs is a critical partner in the state with the capacity and proven track record of delivering results. Thanks to a commitment to data driven processes and programs we know that in Ohio:

- Club 12th graders are 26% more likely to abstain from drugs and alcohol than their peers nationally;
- 97% of Club teens expect to graduate on time; and
- ***For every \$1 invested in Boys & Girls Clubs, Ohio communities recognize \$11.35 in economic benefits.***¹ At the proposed level of funding that is a \$56.75M return on investment in each fiscal year.

For nearly 130 years, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Ohio have inspired and empowered youth to achieve success while championing opportunities for all young people. It is our hope that the current situation helps to build awareness and understanding of the importance of youth development and Club access as social, economic, and moral imperatives here in Ohio.

¹Institute for Social Research and the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan (December, 2015).

Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, members of the Committee, thank you for your time and support. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have immediately upon request.