

11'15/21

Cadence Care Network Testimony on SB 239

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony today regarding Senate Bill 239.

My name is Shannon Harnichar; I am the Program and Compliance Office of Cadence Care Network, a private foster care and behavioral health agency, which has been in operation since 1990. We have also been accredited by the Council on Accreditation since 2005. Being accredited means that a third party (such as COA) has determined through a rigorous assessment of evidence that an organization, agency, or program meets all the most important standards ... that they follow best practice and provide quality services.

I have been overseeing foster care operations at our agency for over 22 years and at this point know what qualifications and skills are crucial for a caseworker and assessor providing treatment foster care services. Our agency will go at least 3 months before being able to find a candidate for our caseworker positions due to the highly stringent qualifications put forth by Ohio Department of Job and Family Services requirements. Numerous highly qualified candidates apply for the position, many of them with many years of experience, but if they do not hold a LSW or meet the other qualifications outlined in 5101:2-1-01 (B), specifically (B) 3245 and #335, then we cannot hire them. During these months of waiting for a candidate that meets the ODJFS requirements our other caseworkers have to carry a heavy caseload, therefore not being able to provide the intensive services necessary in the best interest of the child placed or provide the much needed support to our foster caregivers. To give you a specific example we had an individual apply for the position that held a Master's in Education and worked as a teacher in an alternative school for youth with behaviors. We could not hire this individual, who was extremely qualified, due to not meeting the outlined requirements for a private agency professional treatment staff and team leader. This legislation will ensure that children in treatment foster care can be provided foster homes, caseworker services and supports that they so much deserve.



In a time when the State of Ohio's children need help more than ever due to the Covid-19 crisis, I ask of you to carefully consider this testimony put before you. Not only do the children in foster care deserve this but also the foster parents who take in these children and the dedicated individuals who desire to work in this field .

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony today regarding Senate Bill 239.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shannon Harnichar, MHHS, CSW". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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