



February 9, 2022

Chairman Stephen Huffman
Ohio Senate
Health Committee

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of the importance of replacing statutory terms related to people with disabilities or mental illness under the Mental Health and Disability Terminology Act, as passed by the House.

The fact is, our words matter.

Mental health and mental illness topics are already very stigmatized, especially when it comes to children. That's why *On Our Sleeves*, the national movement for children's mental health, is proud to support all efforts to normalize our language around mental health, and support people-first terminology related to mental illness.

One in five children is living with a mental illness, and 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins before the age of 14. In recent research we conducted with working parents, we heard that 61% are very to extremely concerned about their children's mental health in the past two years, as the pandemic continues to threaten kids' access to routines, health and mental health resources, school, and social connections.

On Our Sleeves started three years ago as a program of Nationwide Children's Hospital here in Columbus, Ohio, with a mission to provide free, evidence-informed resources to all communities in America. Since then, we have reached people in all 50 states with our online content; joined forces with three other children's hospitals from Florida to Dayton, Ohio; and provided downloadable resources to more than 2 million people!

Last year, our Million Classroom Project put resources directly into 1,020,000 classrooms across the country. Later this year, we are partnering with GoNoodle, the popular educational TV station, to reach 4 out of 5 U.S. elementary classrooms with a new program called *The Mooderators*. This show will teach children how to articulate and manage their feelings; just one of the many preventative skills we aim to share via teachers and parents, so children can develop mental wellness habits early.

It is our hope that, working together, we can create a world where mental health and wellness is synonymous with physical health and wellness, and neither topic will carry stigma for the citizens of Ohio.

We urge the committee to support HB 281.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marti Post". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marti Post
Executive Director, *On Our Sleeves*