



Summit County  
**CHILDREN SERVICES**  
*Building Families . . . Building Futures*

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Senate Judiciary Committee  
Opponent Testimony SB216  
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This written testimony is on behalf of Summit County Children Services (SCCS). I am its Executive Director. SCCS is a public children services agency established pursuant to Ohio Revised Code (ORC) chapter 5153. Our mission is: SCCS is committed to the safety, permanency and well-being of the children served, in partnership with families and the community

We are writing to share our opposition to Senate Bill 216, *Enact Dylan's Law*. The bill requires all substance-exposed infants (except for those whose mothers are in medication-assisted treatment) to enter children services custody for at least six months; prohibits parent/infant contact and parent/infant residing together until certain conditions are met; and sets the conditions under which infants may return home.

The provisions of the bill would essentially prohibit Public Children Services agencies (PCSAs) from following the Family First Services Prevention Act which requires the child welfare system to move towards prevention and family preservation. In addition to the parents, the bill will negatively impact children who would have been able to safely remain with their parents while the family receives services. Its blanket mandates will cause a dramatic increase in children in the custody of PCSAs. As it is, PCSAs are experiencing a crisis of lack of placement resources. This bill will make placement of children in the custody of PCSAs likely impossible.

SCCS has implemented START (Sobriety, Treatment and Reducing Trauma), which is evidence informed intervention model. The model utilizes community supports to put intensive services in place to keep children safely with their parents and promote parental recovery and capacity to care for them. This model has proven to be effective in keeping substance exposed children safe.

SB 216 would strip the ability of experienced and skilled child welfare professionals to develop service plans tailored to the unique situation of each family. It has the potential of damaging not helping families.

For the above reasons, SCCS opposes SB 216. Please let me know if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Julie Barnes, M.Ed., LSW  
Executive Director

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**Executive Director**  
Julie Barnes, M.Ed., LSW