



# SANDUSKY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF JOB & FAMILY SERVICES

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2/1/2022

Opponent Testimony SB 216  
Senate Judiciary Committee

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Chair Manning, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and Members of the Committee, this written testimony is on behalf of the Sandusky County DJFS, Children Services Division where I Serve as the Intake Supervisor. I am representing my agency and staff opposing Senate Bill 216, *Enact Dylan's Law*.

This bill requires substance-exposed infants (except those whose mothers are in MAT) to enter into agency custody for at least six months, prohibits parent/child contact, and prohibits parent/infant residing together until certain conditions are met; and sets those conditions whereby a child is able to return home. Based on our dedicated experience in the field, the families, loved ones, and children would not be best served with these expectations. One such expectation is prohibiting any contact between the child and parent until three requirements are met. Another expectation is prohibiting a court to place the substance exposed infant in the temporary custody of either parent or anyone who resides in the parents' household.

Sandusky County DJFS, Children Services Division works many cases involving substance-exposed infants. A one size fits all mandate serving drug exposed infants misses the mark on the need to tailor services and intervention individually to children and families. The following is an example of a case in Sandusky County that would have changed the positive outcome utilizing SB 216. The agency became involved with the family due to the infant testing positive for oxycodone at birth. The mother admitted she had been struggling with an addiction and was hiding it from her close family members, including her boyfriend, the father to her infant. The infant was removed from the mother and placed into the temporary custody of the infant's father. This infant was able to have a close bond with his siblings and his father while his mother went through treatment. His mother was able to have consistent visitation while she focused on her sobriety. The mother ultimately completed treatment and the infant was able to be reunified with his mother at 8 months old. If SB 216 was in place, this child would not have been able to be placed with his father and siblings. In the beginning of the case, best practice and an important

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DIVISION	PHONE	FAX	EMAIL
Public Assistance	419-334-3891	419-332-2156	<a href="mailto:Sandusky-County-Public-Assistance@jfs.ohio.gov">Sandusky-County-Public-Assistance@jfs.ohio.gov</a>
Children Services	419-334-8708	419-355-5329	<a href="mailto:Sandusky-County-Children-Services@jfs.ohio.gov">Sandusky-County-Children-Services@jfs.ohio.gov</a>
Child Support	419-334-2909	419-355-5344	<a href="mailto:Sandusky-County-Child-Support@jfs.ohio.gov">Sandusky-County-Child-Support@jfs.ohio.gov</a>
OhioMeansJobs	419-332-2169	419-332-2721	<a href="mailto:OmjSandCo@jfs.ohio.gov">OmjSandCo@jfs.ohio.gov</a>



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standard of practice is to allow that newborn the ability to bond with his mother as early and as often as possible, safely and supervised. The expectation of the bill prevents children from having a bond with their nuclear and extended family. Like you, we do have a strong desire to keep children safe, however, SB 216 is a reactive approach to child welfare. It doesn't consider what's best for children and families in real time, in real practice.

On behalf of the dedicated staff in Sandusky County serving in the Child Welfare field, we oppose SB216. I am urging the committee to do the same. Thank you for considering the needs of families and children across Ohio.

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