



# Stark County Job & Family Services

Human Services - Children Services - Child Support

February 4, 2022  
Opponent Testimony SB216  
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 Stark County Job and Family Services, Children Services Division.

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. This runs contrary to research as well as current evidenced-informed programming, such as OhioStart and appears to counter guidance within the Family First Act.

Stark County Children Services initiated 2,644 investigations in 2021, over one-third of which involved parental drug abuse. Of those, 169 (involving 187 children) were concerning potentially drug-affected infants that could meet the criteria established by Dylan's Law. Our staff work diligently to keep children safe in the least restrictive manner possible and the concern is that this will simply bring more children into custody. With the right services and supports, many of our families where addiction is a concern can remain together. Most of these families can, and should, maintain contact through visitation while involved in those services which can help them gain and maintain sobriety.

SB216's one-size-fits-all mandate would prevent agencies such as ours, along with our community partners, from serving infants and families according to their unique situations and will result in many infants being unnecessarily separated from parents and from other family members who can care for them.

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**Stark County  
Job & Family Services**  
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For these reasons, Stark County Children Services opposes SB216 and urges the Committee to do the same. Thank you.

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