



SHOWING UP FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

SB 216

Opponent Testimony

Andrea Reany

Southeast Ohio Field Organizer

Showing Up for Racial Justice Ohio

2/7/2022

Dear Chairman Manning, Vice-Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer opponent testimony for SB 216.

My name is Andrea Reany and I am the Southeast Ohio Field Organizer with Showing Up for Racial Justice Ohio. I do community work primarily centered around harm reduction, housing access, and youth advocacy in the small town of Nelsonville, Athens County.

I am writing to you on behalf of Showing Up for Racial Justice Ohio to oppose SB 216, also known as “Dylan’s Law”. My organization opposes this legislation because of what it will do to tear Ohio families apart and harm children, parents, and caregivers alike.

Every week we knock on the doors of local residents to listen to them talk about the issues that are most pressing in our community. In our work we see on a daily basis how little support there is for parents who use drugs to get what they need to live happier and healthier lives for themselves and their loved ones. Especially in a time like this when beds in rehabilitation or detox facilities for our rural community are sorely lacking and access to MAT (medication assisted treatment) can be challenging, we know that it is cruel to remove a child from their family while greatly raising the requirements for those children to ever return.

We are failing our neighbors by not giving them a chance to get better and harshening punishments for trying to survive.

If this bill passes, more Ohio children and families will experience trauma and negative consequences. This bill gives no clear alternative to actually providing parents with substance use disorder the resources they need to get better- it only punishes them. Many children experience abuse in the child welfare system¹, and this legislation is proposing no additional protections to ensure against such abuse.

Showing Up for Racial Justice Ohio opposes SB 216 and the removal of children from their birth families on the basis that their parents are unfit caregivers due to substance use.

We urge you to halt this legislation and move forward with efforts that actually support the safety and well-being of all Ohio families. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Sincerely,

Andrea Reany
Southeast Ohio Field Organizer
Showing Up for Racial Justice Ohio
drea@surjaction.org
(419) 277-2432

¹ https://scholarworks.law.ubalt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2087&context=all_fac