



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

May 5, 2021

Chairman Brenner, Vice Chair Blessing, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Substitute House Bill 110. My name is Woody Fitton and I have the pleasure as serving as the President/CEO of the Great Miami Valley YMCA. I am here today testifying on behalf of the Ohio Alliance of YMCAs, the nonprofit organization that represents the 162 YMCAs throughout the state. We are a grassroots driven and governed organization that advocates and educates on behalf of the YMCAs and their mission.

The Great Miami Valley YMCA serves over 50,000 residents in Butler, Preble, and Warren counties by strengthening our communities so that all people can reach their potential through healthy living, youth development and social responsibility. As a member of the Ohio Alliance of YMCAs, we are part of the 162 YMCAs that serve the citizens of the State of Ohio.

The Ohio Alliance of YMCAs would like to thank the Ohio House of Representatives for their support for the Ys before and after school and summer day camp programs and the role we play to help Ohio's youth and to ensure we can meet our student's increased needs.

Ohio YMCAs provide over 500 before and after school and summer day camp programs throughout the year, making the YMCAs the single largest school age childcare provider in Ohio. As the largest provider, YMCAs are deeply concerned about the impacts of COVID-19 on the academic achievement, social-emotional development, and physical and nutritional health of Ohio's young people.

As we look ahead, we need strong leadership to ensure that Ohio's youth have the support they need to catch up and re-engage in school and community life. Fortunately, our YMCAs are taking steps today to help address learning loss and support students and their families this summer and school year.

The amendment that was submitted before the House would allocate \$5 million each fiscal year to Ohio YMCAs day camp and before and after school programs to help students with COVID-19 related to learning loss and mental health. We are thankful for the \$500,000 that was allocated in the House and believe this is a great start that will assist in our programs across the state. This investment will create returns beyond measure in the lives of the kids and families we serve.

With that said, because of the pandemic, our children's mental health has been impacted severely, and these effects are being observed and felt in school and before and after school settings. It is for these reasons that we will continue to advocate for the full \$5



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million each fiscal year to provide resources to equip our camp counselors and after school teachers to serve these challenged students properly.

Research demonstrates that afterschool and summer learning programs are effective at increasing student's attendance, course credits, and on-time graduation, as well as improving performance in subjects like math and English. Perhaps most importantly, students in afterschool and summer learning programs build the social and emotional skills and connections to peers and caring adults that the pandemic has forced many to forgo for over a year.

These funds will be a start to the support needed for the students who are in dire need of summer learning loss services because of the pandemic. Teachers in schools and before and after school programs already have been feeling the effects, and seeing the issues, arising with students related to educational instability.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for your time. We look forward to continuing to work together to find ways to support the academic achievement, social-emotional development, and physical and nutritional health of Ohio's young people. I'd be happy to answer any questions.