



**Columbiana County Department of Job & Family Services
Child Support Enforcement Agency**

Eileen Dray-Bardon, Director

7989 Dickey Drive, Suite 2

Lisbon, Ohio 44432

Phone: 330-424-7781 Fax: 330-420-2106

House Community and Family Advancement Committee

May 15, 2018

Proponent Testimony of Debra S. Kempers, CSEA Administrator

SB125

Chairman Ginter, Vice Chairman LaTourette, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the House Community and Family Advancement Committee, my name is Debra Kempers and I am the Administrator for the Columbiana County Child Support Enforcement Agency. Columbiana County DJFS is a triple combined agency which includes Income Maintenance, Children Services and Child Support. I have worked for the agency for 28 years and have been in my current position for over 12 years. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written proponent testimony in support of SB125. I am convinced that the changes proposed in SB125 would benefit Ohio's Child Support Program and those impacted by the program. As you know, SB125 is the companion bill to HB366 which this committee unanimously passed earlier this year.

In review, the economic tables that we are currently using to determine the amount of a child support order have not been up-dated in over 26 years and when they were created, they were based on tables and data from the early 1980s. I believe it is crucial that the economic tables be up-dated to better represent and reflect the costs incurred in raising a child in today's economy. SB125 accomplishes this while also considering parenting time issues that have changed dramatically in the last 25 years. As family dynamics have evolved, we see non-custodial parents spending more time with their children and taking a more active role in the parenting process. SB125's proposed changes acknowledge time spent with the children and factors that into the child support calculation.

Although orders for mid to higher income families may be slighted effected under the proposed changes in SB125, there are more significant changes for lower income non-custodial parents. There is a self-sufficiency element built in that will result in low income non-custodial parents retaining income necessary to maintain a level of sustainability necessary to be productive and employable.



**Columbiana County Department of Job & Family Services
Child Support Enforcement Agency
Eileen Dray-Bardon, Director**

7989 Dickey Drive, Suite 2
Lisbon, Ohio 44432
Phone: 330-424-7781 Fax: 330-420-2106

SB125 also addresses issues unique to non-custodial parents and custodial parents that have multiple children with the same or different partners by providing a consistent standard deduction for each child not subject to the order at hand.

Another proposal in SB125 that I believe is important is that the child support guidelines would be removed from statute and placed in rule. We can't anticipate what changes we may see in the future of the child support program or in family dynamics but we can predict, with certainty, that there will be changes. By moving the guidelines to rule format the process to make necessary adjustments, based on those changes, will be simplified.

Finally, please consider that the elements presented in SB125 are designed to work in tandem to produce orders that consider multiple aspects of today's families, represent current and reasonable costs involved with raising a child in today's economic climate and produce orders that are based on an ability to pay with a focus on increasing consistent and reliable payments to families.

In closing, Columbiana County DJFS / CSEA supports SB125 and we would ask that you lend your support to this bill as well. Your questions are welcome and your support is appreciated. SB125 is a very important step towards moving Ohio's Child Support Program forward to encompass the societal and economic changes we see today and the ones we anticipate for the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Debra S. Kempers, Administrator
Columbiana County CSEA
330-420-6570