



Safe Children, Stable Families, Supportive Communities

Ohio Senate
Senate Finance Committee
Testimony on HB166
May 28, 2019
Angela Sausser, Executive Director
Public Children Services Association of Ohio
37 W Broad Street, Suite 1100, Columbus OH 43215
Angela@pcsao.org
614-224-5802

Good morning Chairman Dolan, Vice-Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee. My name is Angela Sausser and I am the Executive Director of the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). PCSAO is a membership-driven association of Ohio's 88 county Public Children Services Agencies (PCSAs) that advocates for and promotes child protection program excellence and sound public policy for safe children, stable families, and supportive communities. We are pleased to provide this proponent testimony in support of HB 166 as it pertains to ResultsOHIO.

The ResultsOHIO fund will support pay for success initiatives championed by the DeWine Administration and the General Assembly to take on the social and public health challenges facing Ohio such as the opioid epidemic, infant mortality, and lead poisoning. This allows the state to direct its efforts toward initiatives that are proven effective rather than wasting taxpayer dollars on failed programs.

PCSAO is supportive of this approach for several reasons. Ohio's children services system is in a severe crisis, largely attributed to the opioid epidemic. This severe crisis equates to 26% more children are in foster care than five years ago-- almost 3,500 more children. On any given day, Ohio now has nearly 16,000 children in out-of-home care.

With more children in care with more complex needs, placement costs (room and board for children in a foster home, group home, or residential treatment facility) have risen rapidly. Over the past five years, these placement costs have increased by 40% or \$109 million more today than in 2013. This is not sustainable for any county in Ohio.

More children in care, with more complex needs, unsustainable placement costs, and an overburdened workforce leads to poor outcomes for children and families. While Ohio's children services system desperately needs the proposed investments in HB 166 to stabilize today's severe crisis in children services and begin the reform so desperately needed; ResultsOHIO would be very beneficial in developing innovative, proven effective services that would lead to even better outcomes for children and families.

The timing of ResultsOHIO could not be any better in the world of children services, as there is a new federal opportunity for states to develop evidence-based interventions with a fifty-fifty match that would prevent children from coming into foster care. ResultsOHIO could be the incubator of new evidence-based services for Ohio to test and grow before committing federal and state funding statewide.

The Governor's proposed budget investments along with the incredible additional investment from Speaker Householder and the House Finance Committee are right on target to help stabilize today's severe crisis in children services and begin the reform so desperately needed in our system. These investments must be maintained along with the commitment to create ResultsOHIO so Ohio can be innovators of proven effective practices for social service and healthcare sectors that leads to better outcomes for our citizens.

Thank you.