SHANNON ISOM

OHIO COUNCIL OF YWCAs

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Sub. H.B. 166 – Proponent Testimony

June 13, 2019

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chairman Burke, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, my name is Shannon Isom, President and CEO of YWCA Dayton and President of the Ohio Council of YWCAs. Our Council is made up of the 14 YWCA chapters across the State, and we are committed to our mission of eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

I want to begin by thanking this Committee for including in Sub. H.B. 166 the appropriation of $500,000 per fiscal year through TANF Block Grant funds to support YWCA programs that prevent gender-based violence, support victims of gender-based violence, provide trauma-informed support for survivors, and support educational opportunities for at-risk youth. This funding will help our YWs meet the growing demands for our services. We will be in a position to expand our emergency shelters, crisis hotline support, and non-residential services. We will also be able to provide more wrap-around services that address gender-based violence, including trauma-informed support for survivors such as counseling, case management, and substance abuse services. Finally, we will be able to enhance our provision of trauma-informed educational opportunities for at-risk youth as part of our wrap-around services. The majority of Ohioans who will benefit from these increased services are people of color and individuals living in poverty.

Founded in 1870, YWCA Dayton is the oldest social services agency serving women in Montgomery and Preble counties in Ohio. YWCA Dayton lives its mission through four core service areas: operating the only domestic violence shelters and rape crisis centers in Montgomery and Preble counties, along with the region’s longest-running 24/7 crisis hotline; providing affordable housing and wrap-around life skills support for women and families who are survivors of abuse or are at risk of homelessness; empowering girls to explore and achieve their highest potential through our signature Girls LEAD! leadership development program; and advocating for legislative and public policy priorities that promote racial, social, and gender justice.

In 2018, YWCA Dayton’s domestic violence services sheltered nearly 200 women and children; provided more than 12,000 nights of stay in shelter; answered more than 8,000 crisis calls; and provided more than 15,000 hours of advocacy, counseling, and crisis support. 85 percent of the people served by YWCA Dayton have incomes below the poverty level, and 31 percent are people of color.

The Ohio Council of YWCAs’ member organizations reached more than 90,000 women, girls, and family members last year through our programming at 36 program sites across Ohio, including 30,960 children and 39,296 domestic violence survivors. With this funding, we will be able to help even more women, girls, and families. These individuals are among the most vulnerable Ohioans, and we applaud your commitment to support programming that helps them.