



Representative Sedrick Denson
Sponsor Testimony on House Concurrent Resolution 45
House Behavioral Health and Recovery Supports Committee

Good morning Chairwoman Carruthers, Vice Chair Pavliga, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Behavioral Health and Recovery Supports Committee. Thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of House Concurrent Resolution 45.

This resolution urges the Governor to declare a State of Emergency on Childhood Trauma to raise public awareness on identifying and treating conditions onset by toxic stress during childhood years. The American Academy of Pediatrics defines adverse childhood experiences, otherwise known as ACEs, as violence, abuse, suffering from emotional or physical neglect, facing household challenges such as substance use problems, mental health complications, and instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison. Childhood trauma has a foundational impact on various aspects throughout a lifespan, such as a decline in quality of life opportunities such as education and job potential. These experiences can increase the risks of injury, sexually transmitted infections, maternal and child health problems (including teen pregnancy, pregnancy complications, and fetal death), involvement in sex trafficking, and a wide range of chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and suicide.

Childhood Trauma is pervasive issue facing so many Ohio children as ACEs are more common that you may think. According to the CDC, nearly 61% of adults surveyed across 25 states reported that they had experienced at least one type of ACE, and nearly 1 in 6 reported they had experienced four or more types of ACEs.

Preventing ACEs could potentially reduce a significant number of health conditions, as they are associated with long-term health problems. For example, up to 1.9 million cases of heart disease and 21 million cases of depression could have been potentially avoided by preventing ACEs. A 10% reduction in ACEs in North America could equate to an annual savings of \$56 billion, therefore lessening the costly economic and social impact on families and our communities.

Some children are at greater risk than others. According to the American Psychological Association, poverty is a significant driver of ACEs and trauma. Women and several racial/ethnic minority groups were at greater risk for having experienced 4 or more types of ACEs. We see communities of color be effected by social determinants of health, such as living in under-resourced or racially segregated neighborhoods, frequently moving, and experiencing food insecurity. Toxic stress from ACEs can negatively affect children's brain development,

immune systems, and stress-response systems. These changes can affect children's attention, decision-making, and learning.

These are the things we must understand, generate awareness and place greater emphasis on if we want to address the root causes of childhood trauma. By providing strengthen economic support for families, providing quality education early in life, enhancing parenting skills, promoting healthy childhood development and intervening to prevent harm and risk(s), are only a few strategies that help children reach their full potential and ensure Ohio is a state where our youth can thrive.

Thank you again for your time today. I will now hand it over to my joint sponsor Representative Brinkman to speak.