



Ohio Association of Domestic Relations Judges

House Criminal Justice Committee
Judge Randall D. Fuller
Proponent Testimony on House Bill 226
October 12, 2021

Chair LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, I thank you for this opportunity to submit proponent testimony for House Bill 226 on behalf of the Ohio Association of Domestic Relations Judges.

I am Judge Randall Fuller. I was elected to serve as the first Judge of the Common Pleas Court of Delaware County, Domestic Relations Division in 2016. Prior to taking the bench, I practiced law in downtown Delaware for 21 years. I currently serve as the President-Elect of the Ohio Association of Domestic Relations Judges and as President of the Ohio Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts (AFCC). I am a member of the Ohio Judicial Conference's Domestic Relations Law and Procedure Committee, Court Administration Committee, Court Technology Committee and a member of the Judicial Advisory Group. I am also a member of the National Council for Juvenile and Family Court Judges and a member of the American Judges Association.

The Ohio Association of Domestic Relations Judges (OADRJ) consists of common pleas judges having Domestic Relations court jurisdiction. The association promotes the common business interest of Ohio Domestic Relations court judges, and provides leadership for a just and effective Domestic Relations court system throughout the state of Ohio.

Domestic Relations judges appoint guardians ad litem (GAL) to assist the court in determining the best interest of a child involved in a family law dispute. A GAL meets with both parents and, usually, goes into their home to observe the parents' interaction with the child. Many Domestic Relations courts report harassment or intimidation of an appointed GAL. Occasionally, due to harassment or intimidation, a GAL requests removal from a specific case, or in extreme circumstances, removal from a court's list of GALs accepting cases. I have experienced this situation in Delaware County. The OADRJ supports H.B. 226 and its goal of providing protection to court-appointed child advocates and the recognition of the essential and difficult role a GAL plays in Domestic Relations courts.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of H.B. 226. We ask that you pass this important bill for family law courts. We thank the sponsors, Representative Miller and Representative Pavliga, for carrying this legislation. I would be happy to follow-up with any questions you may have.