



**Patrick M. Welsh**  
Deputy Director  
Child Support Enforcement

Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee  
Written Proponent Testimony of Patrick Welsh, Esq.  
Fairfield County Child Support Enforcement Agency  
HB83  
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Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on behalf of the Fairfield County Child Support Enforcement Agency. My name is Patrick Welsh and I am the Deputy Director of the Fairfield County Child Support Enforcement Agency. In addition, I am an attorney with fourteen years in the child support program as a courtroom attorney for our agency.

As you have heard from some of my county agency colleagues, some child support enforcement agencies (CSEAs) are able to provide services to caretakers with physical custody of a child, while others cannot. My county, due its Appellate District placement and applicable case law, is one of many that cannot provide services to these caretakers. In fact, we have nearly 500 open caretaker cases in which neither paternity nor support has been addressed, due to our inability to provide services to these caretakers. 73% of these cases involve caretakers who receive public assistance on the child(ren)'s behalf, and 53% of these cases have gone more than two years without paternity and/or support establishment. As a result, the parents of the children in these cases have not been required to provide support to the very person that is caring for their children, sometimes for years. These caretakers are often on fixed or limited income and child support could be a great resource to their households and the children for whom they provide care.

HB83 will create a consistent process for caretakers to receive child support services regardless of county and will allow child support to reach the home where the child is residing. Presently, these cases are stuck in a legal limbo in my county. House Bill 83 will allow us to address these cases. The specific geographical location of a child within our state should not serve as the determining factor as to whether their caretaker can receive financial support (child support) for their benefit.

This bill is a culmination of many years of discussion and work as we have watched our caretaker caseloads grow across Ohio. The opioid and mental health epidemics continue to further this increase in caretaker case volume. I ask for your support of this bill and thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony.

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