



Proponent Testimony for HB 7  
Written Testimony  
May 9, 2023  
Submitted by Carrie Arblaster  
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Chairwoman Schmidt, Vice Chair Miller, Ranking Member Denson and members of the Families and Aging committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 7.

My name is Carrie Arblaster, Vice President of Public Policy for Philanthropy Ohio, a statewide association whose mission is to lead and equip Ohio philanthropy to be effective partners for change in their communities. We work to build the skills, knowledge, and connections among grantmaking organizations, helping them to become more strategic and efficient in their efforts to support nonprofits and communities. Our nearly 200 members collectively hold more than \$30 billion in assets and in 2020 invested over \$1.9 billion into their communities.

Philanthropy Ohio and our members are committed to improving health outcomes for all Ohioans by advancing equitable, non-racist and non-discriminatory policies. We seek innovative ways to deliver much needed resources to Ohio communities and believe to accomplish this we must start at the beginning by addressing maternal and infant health. House Bill 7 does this and for that we would like to thank the bill sponsors, Representative White and Representative Humphrey, for their leadership.

It has become increasingly clear that to ensure that all children have a strong, equitable start we cannot just focus on coverage and access to care but must look beyond these to the environment in which women and babies are living. Coverage and access are important, but we now know that there are many other factors impacting the health and well-being of our moms and babies. In March of 2023 the Health Policy Institute of Ohio issued the policy brief entitled "Social Drivers of Infant Mortality". What their research shows is that there are significant challenges outside of coverage and access that negatively impact the overall health of mom and baby. These challenges reside in four main areas: housing, transportation, education and employment [3].

As many of you know, Ohio's maternal and infant mortality rate remains stubbornly high. We currently rank 41<sup>st</sup> in infant mortality [2]. This is not acceptable. The authors of HB 7 know this, as evidenced by the many issues they are attempting to address in this important piece of legislation.

It is essential that we work to create a healthy, holistic, eco system so that our mothers and babies can thrive. There are many provisions within HB 7 that we support, however today I want to voice our strong support for six specific provisions: doula services, pregnancy and



postpartum mobile application, WIC enrollment, infant vitality supports, healthy beginnings at home and continuous Medicaid enrollment for young children.

Ohio Philanthropy has a history of supporting organizations delivering essential care to mothers and babies. Specifically, the work of doulas. We applaud the bill sponsors for including this and we ask that the committee support passage of HB 7.

Philanthropy Ohio and our members remain committed to our work here in the state of Ohio and look forward to partnering with you on these very important issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and I am available for follow-up questions should any arise.

Resources:

1. [https://www.healthpolicyohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/HBAHFinalReport\\_06.17.2021.pdf](https://www.healthpolicyohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/HBAHFinalReport_06.17.2021.pdf)
2. <https://www.healthpolicyohio.org/2023-health-value-dashboard/>
3. [https://www.healthpolicyohio.org/post-social-drivers-of-infant-mortality-recommendations-for-action-and-accountability-in-ohio/?mc\\_cid=e4209eb6fc&mc\\_eid=e3b1f130aa](https://www.healthpolicyohio.org/post-social-drivers-of-infant-mortality-recommendations-for-action-and-accountability-in-ohio/?mc_cid=e4209eb6fc&mc_eid=e3b1f130aa)
4. [https://www.healthpolicynews.org/daily\\_review/2022/12/pregnancy-complications-worse-among-black-women-in-ohio-data-shows.html](https://www.healthpolicynews.org/daily_review/2022/12/pregnancy-complications-worse-among-black-women-in-ohio-data-shows.html)
5. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/closing-the-coverage-gap-would-improve-black-maternal-health>