



Ohio Grandparent Kinship Coalition



National Center for Adoption Law & Policy



Children's Defense Fund OHIO



Ohio's Resource Families



adoptive foster kinship respite



DAVE THOMAS FOUNDATION FOR ADOPTION®

Finding Forever Families for Children in Foster Care



OHIO YAB



June 21, 2011

- To: Chairman Tim Grendell, Senate Judiciary Committee - Criminal Justice  
 Senator Larry Obhof, Vice Chair  
 Senator Frank LaRose  
 Senator Peggy Lehner  
 Senator Scott Oelslager  
 Senator Mark Wagoner
- Senator Nina Turner, Ranking Minority Member  
 Senator Eric Kearney  
 Senator Joe Schiavoni

RE: **Opposition to HB 86 Foster Child Community Notification Provisions**

**We strongly urge members of the Senate Judiciary-Criminal Justice Committee and all members of the Senate to remove provisions slipped into HB 86 that mix Sex Offender Registration and Notification policy with the placement of abused and neglected children into treatment and therapeutic foster homes.** The amendment language, added into the substitute bill can be found in Sections 2151.55 THROUGH 2151.555.

Currently, about half of all foster children are placed in some level of therapeutic care due to their history of being abused or neglected. The notification requirements added to HB 86 target many children who pose no community safety threat and will have the unintended effect of stigmatizing and further traumatizing children for being foster children and needing specific treatment to address multiple and sometimes severe psychiatric, emotional and behavioral management issues.

The notification provisions cross the line and will not increase community safety, but rather add to the vulnerability of the children our state is obligated to protect from additional trauma and abuse. We are talking about children who, at no fault of their own, have been removed from their homes and traumatized by abuse and neglect.

We oppose this amendment as it would violate privacy and penalize children and families, with no improvement of public safety. These community notification requirements perpetuate the myth that people with mental illnesses or emotional disorders are violent. These provisions promote the criminalization of individuals with mental illness. Furthermore, these notification provisions contribute to the challenge of finding, preparing and supporting the foster homes that are desperately needed to care for Ohio's abused and neglected children.

As a coalition, we strongly request you delete this language.

Sincerely,

OHIO YAB (Overcoming Hurdles In Ohio Youth Advisory Board), Cieria Rodriguez-Toney, President  
Adopt America Network (based in Lucas County), Wendy Sproerl, President  
Children's Defense Fund-Ohio, Renuka Mayadev, Director  
Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Rita L. Soronen, President & CEO  
National Alliance on Mental Illness of Ohio, Terry Russell, Executive Director  
National Center for Adoption & Law Policy, Capital University Law School, Denise St. Claire, Director  
Ohio Adoption Planning Group (OAPG), Kathy Franz of NOAS, Chair  
Ohio Association of Child Caring Agencies, Penny Wyman, Executive Director  
Ohio CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), Jackie Wilson, Executive Director  
Ohio Foster Care Association (OFCA), Betsy Johnson, Board President  
Ohio Grandparent Kinship Coalition, Dionne Simmons, Wright State University & Jamie Richardson, Lucas Co  
Area Agency on Aging, OGKC Co-Presidents  
Ohio Independent Living Association (OHILA), Darlene Skinner of Daybreak, President  
Public Children Services Association of Ohio, Crystal Ward Allen, Executive Director  
The Ohio Council, Hubert Wirtz, CEO  
Voices for Ohio's Children, Amy Swanson, Executive Director  
Bellefaire Jewish Children's Bureau, Debbie Cowan, Director  
Catholic Charities / Parmadale, Maureen E. Dee, Director  
Daybreak, Linda Kramer, CEO  
Maryhaven, Paul H. Coleman, President and CEO  
Northeast Ohio Adoption Services (NOAS), Cindy Deal, Executive Director  
Pathway Caring for Children, Eric Belden, Executive Director  
The Village Network, Jim Miller, Executive Director