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Public Policy Memo

To: Members of the House Veterans Affairs Committee
From: Crystal Allen, Gayle Channing Tenenbaum and Greg Kapcar
Public Children Services Association of Ohio, on behalf of our Statewide Membership
Date: Tuesday, December 15, 2009
Re: HB 62 – Civil Service Exemption Amendment

The Public Children Services Association of Ohio and its membership support changing current law that exempts public child welfare professionals from the purview of the Social Work licensure board when they are licensed. If someone is licensed, they should be required to follow all the same rules as any professional that is a licensed Social Worker, regardless of where they work.

We appreciate the additional amendment language recognizing the qualifications for adoption assessors are related to their training, not licensure alone.

However, given that the civil service exemption amendment eliminates current language in the Social Work laws regarding public children services caseworkers, we want to make sure there is never an interpretation that possessing a license is required to do the job duties of a public child welfare professional, but rather employment is a function of qualifications set forth in 5153.112. Thus, we have worked with Representative Pryor to craft additional proactive language to clarify this issue, and he has indicated his support.

Significant education and training is needed to do the complex child welfare mission of keeping children safe and in stable, permanent homes. Thus, we depend upon our premier Ohio Child Welfare Training Program to prepare professionals in addition to their education. We also have a great partnership with selected universities in Ohio with specific child welfare curriculum preparation for students selected to be in that limited program. Unfortunately, Ohio university schools of Social Work are unable to meet the demand for our entire statewide workforce, especially in rural areas of the state. Our position on this issue is well stated in the attached document.

Thank you!