



Public Children Services Association of Ohio

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To: Chairman Willamowski and members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Gayle Channing Tenenbaum, PCSAO Legislative Director
Greg Kapcar, PCSAO Assistant Legislative Director

Date: December 8, 2005

Re: Written Testimony – Supporting Senate Bill 17
Sponsor, Senator Bob Spada

Good morning Chairman Willamowski and members of the House Judiciary Committee. Thank you for this opportunity for the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 17 sponsored by Senator Bob Spada.

We regret not being able to attend in person to offer this testimony, but both of us are involved in a two-day, all-day long Executive Membership meeting of PCSAO today and tomorrow (Friday, December 9th) where we are addressing several issues critical to the association and serving abused and neglected children throughout Ohio. PCSAO represents the 88 public child protection agencies here in Ohio, working for safe children, stable families and supportive communities; so, we are very grateful to you for your understanding and accepting this testimony in written form.

First, we would like to recognize and acknowledge Senator Spada for his work on this bill over the span of two General Assemblies and his overall commitment to protecting and preventing children from being abused or neglected. Second, we would like to commend Chairman Willamowski for his diligence and thoroughness in ensuring that all sides are heard on this issue.

PCSAO supports Senate Bill 17 – anytime we can keep a child from being abused or re-abused that is our mission in Ohio. Anything we can do to protect children from being abused is what we need to do. While we support the language in the bill that requires clerics and other church leaders to report when they know or reasonably suspect a child is being abused or neglected by other clerics or church leaders, PCSAO believes this does not go far enough in protecting and preventing children from being abused or neglected. As currently written, SB 17 would not bring Ohio in line with 37 other states that require clerics or any other person to report known or suspected child abuse or neglect. If the goal is to protect children from abuse or neglect in this state, the preferred option from our perspective is to require clerics or church leaders to be mandatory reporters of known or suspected child abuse or neglect committed by any person.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony and we will be more than happy to respond to any questions you or members of the committee might have for us. Please feel free to contact either one of us. Gayle can be reached at 614-222-6555 and Greg can be reached at 614-224-5802.

Sincerely,

Gayle Channing Tenenbaum

Gayle Channing Tenenbaum
Legislative Director

Gregory R. Kapcar

Gregory R. Kapcar
Assistant Legislative Director