



House Community and Family Advancement Committee

Testimony on Revised Sub HB63

April 19, 2016

Mary D. Wachtel

Public Children Services Association of Ohio

37 W. Broad Street, Suite 1100

Columbus, OH 43215

Good afternoon Chairman Derickson, Vice-Chair Ginter, Ranking Member Howse and members of the Committee. My name is Mary Wachtel and I am Legislative Director for the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding Revised Sub HB63, Child Abuse—Neglect Reporting, on behalf of the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, a membership driven association serving Ohio's county Public Children Services Agencies through the support of program excellence and sound public policy for safe children, stable families and supportive communities.

PCSAO has come before this committee previously to express concerns and opposition to HB63 as introduced and the original substitute bill. We appreciate the opportunity to come before you today and express our support for Revised Substitute HB63.

Revised Substitute HB63 addresses our concerns about a number of issues, including:

- Provides a definition of unregulated child custody transfer (rehoming)
- Establishes criminal penalties for those who participate in unregulated child custody transfers
- Ensures that prospective adoptive parents and other key stakeholders are educated about unregulated child custody transfers
- Establishes an appropriate role for public children service agencies to investigate suspected cases of unregulated child custody transfers and take action when children are found to be unsafe

Most importantly, the legislation preserves the ability of parents to make appropriate temporary care arrangements for their children within the scope of their parental rights and responsibilities without the spectre of a child protective services investigation.

We wish to acknowledge and thank the bill's sponsors, Representative Pelanda and Representative Grossman, as well as House staff, for their willingness to work with interested

parties to craft this revised bill. It is their leadership and commitment to addressing rehoming that has brought this issue the legislative attention it deserves. We believe that this legislative framework can help prevent children from being harmed by this practice in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions.