



Safe Children, Stable Families, Supportive Communities

House State and Local Government Committee

Proponent Testimony, HB405

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Chair Wiggams, Vice-Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the Committee, I am pleased to submit this written proponent testimony for HB405 on behalf of the members of the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). We are a membership-driven association of Ohio's county public children services agencies (PCSAs) that advocates for and promotes children services program excellence and sound public policy for safe children, stable families, and supportive communities.

We thank Representative Cross and Treasurer Sprague for bringing this legislation forward and for the collaborative interested party approach they have used to develop the bill. As custodians of over 16,000 Ohio youth in the foster care system, including over 2,800 who are waiting to be adopted (SFY2018), we are pleased to support HB405, the "Family Forward Act."

Adoptions can be expensive. While adoption from the public children services system is less costly than the fees associated with a private adoption, adoptive families across the board face expenses related to bringing a new child into the family. PCSAO supports efforts to reduce financial barriers for all adoptions.

To help address these barriers, the "Family Forward Act" would establish the Adoption Linked Deposit Program to provide lower-cost loans to individuals who are adopting a child to pay for adoption expenses. We appreciate that adoption-related expenses are defined flexibly in the bill to ensure that as many families as possible can take advantage of this Program. In addition, a loan can support families when expenses occur, which is typically before they can claim tax credits and other assistance.

For these reasons, we encourage you to support HB405. Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.