



Ohio Judicial Conference

The Voice of Ohio Judges

Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee

Paul Pfeifer

Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 6

Chair Burke, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, I thank you for this opportunity to submit proponent testimony for Senate Bill 6 on behalf of the Ohio Judicial Conference. I am Paul Pfeifer, Executive Director of the Ohio Judicial Conference, former Justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio and former State Senator and Representative.

The Ohio Judicial Conference's involvement with host family legislation began with Senate Bill 328 of the 131st General Assembly. Our Juvenile Law & Procedure Committee had concerns with S.B. 328. The sponsor, Senator Coley, invited our assistance in crafting compromise legislation. Judge Robert DeLamatre of the Erie County Juvenile Court, then President of the Ohio Association of Juvenile Court Judges, along with OJC staff and representatives from the Public Children Service Association of Ohio, proposed draft language introduced as S.B. 291 of the 132nd General Assembly.

S.B. 291 allowed the 90-day juvenile court presumption of child abandonment to be rebutted if the requirements of a host family agreement are in place and properly followed. S.B. 291 required criminal background checks on potential host families, training and supervision of host families, and required employees of a host family organization to become mandatory reporters of child abuse or neglect.

Senator Coley and Senator Hottinger reintroduced S.B. 291's compromise language in S.B. 6, along with added requirements for the host families and qualified organizations, such as first aid and CPR certification, prohibitions on prospective host families with specified criminal convictions, and limiting the hosts to one child or one group of siblings.

We thank Senator Coley and Senator Hottinger for continuing to work with us on this legislation and we thank this Committee for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 6. I am available to answer any questions you may have.