

TESTIMONY BEFORE
THE OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FINANCE COMMITTEE

Thursday April 26, 2017

OHIO COALITION FOR ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Offered by
SARA JUNK, CHAIR
Social Services Supervisor
Pike County Department of Job and Family Services

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about substitute H.B. 49. I am Sara Junk, the Chair of the Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services, and Social Services Supervisor with the Pike County Department of Job and Family Services. The Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services is a statewide coalition that strives to enhance the provision of services by collaboration, education, and advocacy for older adults who are at risk or are victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

I want to thank the Committee for not only preserving Adult Protective Services funding in the substitute version of the budget, but also for the increase of \$250,000 per year. We recognize you have to make hard choices and prioritize investment of state dollars, and appreciate the Committee's recognition that combatting elder abuse, neglect and exploitation needs to be a priority for the state of Ohio.

That being said, we urge this committee to support further investment in adult protective services. The state line item is the only dedicated source of funding, and without sufficient dedicated state funds to enable counties to staff at least one full time APS worker, where victims live will continue to determine the level of services they can access because of limited local dollars being available for this purpose.

APS is at a critical point for Ohio. Older adults are increasingly victims of exploitation and abuse as a result of the opiate epidemic. On a recent survey over 80% of county department respondents indicated an increase in APS referrals just in the past two years, and over 40% have seen that increase continue within the past six months. In addition, over 40% of county departments have seen an increase in APS referrals directly attributable to opiate abuse. Now more than ever counties need to have the capacity to be able to respond to requests for help from Ohio's seniors.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sara Junk