



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2014

#### CONTACTS

Gayle Channing Tenenbaum, Public Children Services Association of Ohio, 614-226-3116

Will Petrik, Advocates for Ohio's Future, 614-602-2464

Beth Kowalczyk, Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging, 614-893-5367

Joel Potts, Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association, 614-561-9991

### **Advocates Hail Senate Support for Seniors, Children**

Advocates today hailed the Ohio Senate Finance Committee's omnibus version of the Mid-Biennium Review, HB 483, for maintaining support of new dollars for child and adult protective services. Funding includes \$10 million for Adult Protective Services (APS) and \$10 million for child welfare.

"Senators recognized that now is the time to ensure the safety of abused and neglected children and seniors," Advocates for Ohio's Future State Director Will Petrik said. "This funding will help our county protective services agencies provide direct services to Ohioans by conducting investigations, connecting victims to services, and ensuring the ongoing safety of children and older adults."

#### **Child Welfare**

By preserving new investments made by the House of Representatives, the Senate Finance Committee stood up for children like Mariah Horn, who delivered moving testimony before the committee last week about her mother's addiction and its devastating impact on her family.

"Mariah's story about the ravages of the heroin and opiate epidemic in Ohio is all too common in county children services agencies across the state," said Gayle Channing Tenenbaum, director of policy and governmental affairs at Public Children Services Association of Ohio. "Agencies need boots on the ground to address rising caseloads and the increasing number of children coming into care – and staying longer – because of this crisis."

The child welfare funding is designated for direct services, including prevention efforts to avoid removal of children, support services for youth emancipating from care and transitioning to adulthood and independence, and caseworkers to investigate reports of abuse and make federally required visits to families. A percentage of the funds is set aside for hardship circumstances, available to counties with little or no local levy or other flexible funding. New dollars are tied to improved outcomes for children and families and to helping agencies meet state and federal mandates.

“We are grateful to leaders in the Senate and the House who took a stand for the all-too-often invisible victims of our state’s heroin epidemic,” Tenenbaum said. “We look forward to working with both chambers, and with the Administration, to preserve this critical funding in conference committee and to seek additional investment in the child welfare system.”

### **Adult Protective Services**

“We are pleased that the House and Senate spoke out for Ohio’s seniors with an unprecedented \$10 million investment in adult protective services,” said Beth Kowalczyk, Chief Policy and Operating Officer, Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging. “Simply put, our most vulnerable should have somewhere to turn for help, and this investment can go a long way towards that goal.”

With current state funding for Adult Protective Services at \$500,000 a year, and counties drawing primarily on local resources to provide basic screening and investigation, a \$10 million dollar state investment will add a considerable level of support to strengthen the current core services, and enable the counties to conduct outreach, training, and prevention services.

Sylvia Pla-Raith, Chief Supervisor of Cuyahoga County Adult Protective Services and Chair of the Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services (OCAPS), stated, “OCAPS is appreciative of the efforts of the House and Senate in supporting our elders and in recognizing that local funds are not enough to provide the services needed so Ohioans can age with dignity and respect.”

“We’re pleased that state lawmakers support protecting Ohio’s children and seniors,” Petrik said. “We believe all Ohioans should feel safe in their homes and communities, and we look forward to working with the conference committee and the administration to protect children and older adults from abuse and neglect.”

...