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ODJFS applauds passage of HB 4

Legislation protects children, creates youth and family ombudsmen

COLUMBUS – Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Director Matt Damschroder applauded the passage of House Bill 4. This legislation will help protect Ohio’s children and codifies recommendations of Governor Mike DeWine’s Children Services Transformation Advisory Council (CST).

“Our goal is to transform Ohio’s children services system so that every child can grow up in a safe, loving home,” said Director Damschroder. “Creating the office of the ombudsman to investigate and resolve concerns made by or on the behalf of children and families involved with children services is a result of hearing directly from foster alumni and foster youth about how to improve the system.”

Among other things, the measure establishes a state-level ombudsman office, whose function will be to ensure both youth and families are represented throughout the children services system. In addition, the bill expands the workforce of home assessors, individuals who conduct home visits and gather extensive information to ensure children’s safety in prospective foster or adoptive homes.

About the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council

In 2019, Governor DeWine formed the Children Services Transformation Advisory Council (CST), composed of Ohio families, former foster youth, and subject matter experts. From November 2019 to January 2020, the Advisory Council held 10 forums across the state to hear from hundreds of Ohioans about their experiences with the children services system and their ideas for its improvement. Later that year, the Advisory Council released its final report of recommendations for reforming our children services system, addressing action areas including prevention, workforce challenges, practice, foster care, adoption, kinship care, and juvenile justice. ODJFS is currently implementing the 37 CST recommendations, 36 of which are either complete or are in process.

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The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.

