

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Ohio House Behavioral Health Committee Unanimously Approves Formation of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study Commission**

Columbus, OH – May 10, 2024 – The Ohio House Behavioral Health Committee’s unanimous vote Tuesday on HB 352 to establish the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study Commission marks an important step forward in addressing childhood trauma. In support of this bill, Adoption Network Cleveland garnered the support of over ten advocates who submitted written testimony, including the heartfelt words of two children adopted from foster care.

“I was in foster care for a long time. It was really hard,” wrote a 9-year-old advocate. “I support you starting this study commission. I do not want other kids to go through what me and my brother went through.”

The original ACEs studies conducted by Kaiser Permanente from 1995 to 1997 were instrumental in understanding the lifelong impacts of childhood trauma. The data demonstrated a relationship between the number of ACEs a person experienced and adverse health outcomes in adulthood. Examples of ACEs include emotional and physical abuse, neglect, substance use, mental illness, domestic violence, criminal behavior, divorce, separation, and loss of a loved one. These experiences can lead to serious physical and mental health issues and lifelong challenges in learning and employment.

According to research by Child Trends, one in ten children nationally has experienced three or more ACEs, placing them in a category of especially high risk. In five states—Arizona, Arkansas, Montana, New Mexico, and Ohio—as many as one in seven children had experienced three or more ACEs.

Consisting of two Senate members, two House members, representatives from healthcare, child welfare, and law enforcement fields, and individuals with lived experience, the ACEs Study Commission will prepare a report each year to submit to the general assembly identifying potential legislative strategies for addressing the prevalence and long-term effects of ACEs.

“By understanding ACEs, our state can develop preventive strategies,” said Julia Barton, adoptive parent and Adoption Network Cleveland Public Policy Committee member. “Early intervention and support can mitigate the impact of trauma, promoting resilience and healthier outcomes. Studying ACEs informs

public health policies and programs. It helps allocate resources effectively, create trauma-informed systems, and break cycles of adversity.”

Adoption Network Cleveland applauds the outcome of the Ohio House Behavioral Health Committee's vote and remains committed to advancing initiatives that prioritize the well-being of Ohio's children and families.

**About Adoption Network Cleveland**

Adoption Network Cleveland: The Ohio Family Connection is an innovative non-profit organization with over 35 years of experience serving the adoption and foster care communities. Our organization fulfills otherwise unmet needs for information, advocacy, education and support for adult adoptees, birth parents and birth family; adoptive, kinship and foster families; youth in foster care and foster alumni; and related professionals. More recently, the organization has expanded its services to use its expertise in adoption search, reunion with birth family, and peer support networks to assist those who have been donor-conceived or have misattributed parentage. The organization can be found online at [www.adoptionnetwork.org](http://www.adoptionnetwork.org) or on social media at @AdoptionNetCle.

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