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November 16, 2016

The Honorable Robert Cole Sprague
Chairman, House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services
Riffe Center
77 S. High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Sprague:

Throughout its 103-year history, The Center for Community Solutions (CCS) has been a leader in identifying community issues, analyzing and explaining them, and proposing non-partisan recommendations. In our current strategic plan CCS identified maternal and infant health as a policy priority area and supports initiatives to improve maternal and infant health that will reduce our community's high rates of infant mortality.

It is important that Sub. S.B. 332 addresses social determinants of health that impact rates of infant mortality. A person's health is impacted by much more than clinical issues. Sub. S.B. 332 would require further study of the social determinants of health as they relate to the health of infants and women of child-bearing age. This study is likely to provide valuable information to make more informed decisions moving forward. The bill also provides improved access to contraceptive services that will impact social determinants of maternal health as well and increase birth spacing – a goal of many local initiatives to reduce infant mortality.

This week CCS released a white paper on maternal and child health indicators related to infant mortality. The paper looks at birth record data for women across the state, by county and by neighborhood in Cuyahoga County. We look forward to continuing to monitor these indicators as our state maternal and child health initiatives progress, and reporting back to stakeholders.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for Sub. S.B. 332. We encourage the Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services to favorably report this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tara Britton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tara Britton
Director of Public Policy and Advocacy
Edward D. and Dorothy E. Lynde Fellow