

Good morning, my name is Angela Liddle and I am the Executive Director of Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance. I would like to thank Chairman Meunsh and ____ for the opportunity to provide testimony today on improving our commonwealth's definition of child abuse.

As many of you are aware, PA Family Support Alliance has been a leader in the fight against child abuse for the past 35 years. Our 3 main services **statewide family support and educational programs, training on child abuse recognition and reporting for mandated reporters of child abuse** and **The Front Porch Project**- training for community members so the citizens of our state feel prepared and confident with ways to intervene when they are uncomfortable in situations where children are being mistreated and not safe serve more than 25,000 individuals each year. PFSA program services respect the role of parents and families; their rights to privacy and choice in parenting styles while maintaining a child's safety and well-being as the priority.

For the purposes of today's hearing we want to focus on our extensive experience listening to and training mandated reporters. For the past 18 years, PFSA has spent the largest amount of face time with the broadest cross section of mandated reporters in this state. Our trainers are child welfare experts with more than _____ collective years of experience and our training has been developed and evaluated by some of the top experts in the field. In previous hearings and meetings, we have educated members of the general assembly on the many barriers that prevent mandated reporters from reporting—while I won't repeat the long list today- I do want to point out that our current definition of child abuse has been a road block to getting quality reports of suspected child abuse to or child welfare system. It is cumbersome and lacks clarity making it extremely difficult for mandated reporters to apply to the various situations they encounter with the degree of confidence necessary to adequately fulfill their legal obligation.

Senator Washington's legislation, Senate Bill 20 seeks to make improvements in our state's current child abuse definition. I would like to first comment on the areas of the bill where PFSA believes the legislation brings improvement, and then highlight some areas for consideration where we believe the legislation could be strengthened.

PFSA supports:

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- We encourage defining bodily injury within the Child Protective Services Law.
- We recommend striking the word serious from bodily injury as that has always been challenging to define.
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