

Now retired, during my social work career I worked in the fields of child protection, juvenile justice, children's mental health, support services for children with disabilities, community youth services, and child abuse prevention. I have been a member of the Washington County Commission on Children, Youth and Families, I have directed a program contracted to the Commission in support of teen parents and their babies. I strongly encourage your support of this legislation that would allow voters the opportunity to support local funding for vital prevention and support programs. Cost benefit and effectiveness analysis is complex and has been ongoing. Investments in prevention can be considered to offset expenses of later interventions and throughout the course of a lifespan. Giving voters a choice to take up children's services districts provides them an opportunity to make a difference in their community. Children's services districts can offer a vital local source of funding that can leverage other sources. They can encourage the use of evidence-based program models and best practice standards. Volunteers can be drawn into civic opportunities in support of private non-profit boards and/or trained for more direct support roles. Please choose to make this difference so that others throughout our communities might then choose to make a difference for our children, youth, and families.