

Sponsor Testimony of Devita Douglas
Regarding Ohio Sick Child Care Legislation (House Bill 77) Before the House Commerce and Labor
Committee Tuesday, May 16, 2017

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Lepore-Hagan and members of the House Commerce and Labor Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer proponent testimony on behalf of House Bill 77.

House Bill 77 is a piece of legislation which I believe serves the needs of parents, employers, schools, daycares, and children. There are currently no child care facilities that offers child care sick care services within the state of Ohio for mildly ill children.

If you are a parent, you can relate to the dilemma parents are faced with daily, trying to find someone to take care of their children when they are too sick to attend daycare/school. Today supporting a family can be costly, and to survive financially, sometimes both parents must work. Therefore, when you have sick children and don't have a back-up plan someone must stay at home. Even a minor illness presents a dilemma. Like many people, relatives live too far from their families and friends are working as well.

Scenario One- This is family, the has wife launched a new, business, and the husband works as a deputy editor which he began six weeks ago. Their child got ill with a cold, and they couldn't take him to daycare, or to family that lives far away. They had to determine whose job is precedence? Which of the two must call everyone and cancel meetings? Who shoulders the responsibility of family?

For most of the people in previous generations, the answer was easy: Mom. She'd take care of it, no problem! However, the father sucked it up and took some time off to take care of his sick kid. He and his wife juggled their jobs, emails, and editing assignments along with their kid's sickness and each other's precarious mental states. And it was hard. I mean it was hard. But they worked it out.

Quality child care is a critical issue for children, working parents, businesses, and the community. The Childcare and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) is the primary federal program that provides funding for child care assistance for low-income working parents. Quality childcare enables parents to work or go to school while also providing young children with early childhood experiences needed for health development.

Childcare assistance is a vital public investment that increases the sustainability of employment for low-income parents and provides stability for parents struggling to gain economic security. Childcare subsidies help reduce the financial burden on low-income families. Studies have shown that without child care assistance, poor families are more likely to go into or stay in debt, return to welfare, choose low-quality or unlicensed child care, and face tough spending decisions for their household.

Scenario Two- Working mother with three children, working a \$8.00 hr. job, that she doesn't feel is secure at all, especially when trying to juggle the demands of her family and with those of her employer. It's very stressful to be a mom and a worker. One of her children developed pink-eye, and she had to call off work for three days. The following week another child developed pink-eye, leaving her with no other option but to call off again, because she couldn't take her child to school or daycare. Her employer then told her not to return to work. The mother of three also received childcare vouchers, which she no longer qualified for because she was no longer employed.

Working mothers regularly send children to school sick, because they don't feel they're able to take time off to care for them. Researchers found four out of ten mothers have sent their child to school when he or she wasn't feeling well because they felt unable to take the day off. The study also found around one in six mothers have been made to feel guilty by their boss after taking time off to care for their sick child.

Taking extra days off in time can be a real struggle especially in the current economic climate when people may be worried about their job security. An incredibly one of the ten 2,000 working mothers polled said they had received written warning.

Here is where House Bill 77 can help. It will allow working parents to have a back-up plan for their children's sick care solution. It will reduce illnesses in schools and daycares, and reduce absenteeism in the work place, allowing parents to gain economic security, and make sick care easier for their children.

The House Bill 77 would allow parents to feel relieved to have a Plan-B back-up plan, to properly care for their children by trained medical professionals that would benefit their employer, and the care of their children.

The sick child care center will have licensed physicians, nurse practitioners, RN's, LPN's, and CNA's to care for children ages ranging (8) weeks to 12 years of age. All staffed will be properly trained and practice strict Infection Control Policies & Procedures.

The facility will be state-of-the art with rooms that will accommodate airborne infection isolation that will prevent transmission of infectious agents ensuring the maximum health and safety of other children.

Everyone in attendance can attest to the benefits of House Bill 77. It will benefit every working parent-with job security, and help employer's groups, maintain productivity. It will also benefit schools, and daycares by reducing the spread of illnesses among other children and teachers.

Thanks again for the opportunity to offer my testimony of parents, employers, schools/daycares, and children on House Bill 77.

Devita Douglas Director of Operations- Zakai Care