

Testimony on HB 166, proponent

April 10, 2019

To: House of Representatives Finance Committee Health and Human Services Sub-Committee

From: Becky Ciminillo, President, Ohio Association of Child Care Providers (OACCP)

Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Minority Member West and members of the committee: Thank you for allowing me to testify today in support of the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services child care, early development and learning provisions of HB 166.

My name is Becky Ciminillo and I am the Vice President of Youth Development for the YMCA of Central Ohio. I am also the President of the Ohio Association of Child Care Providers (OACCP). OACCP represents the Directors and Business Owners of over 600 licensed child care centers. Our members educate and care for over 50,000 of Ohio's youngest citizens, including private pay and publicly funded children, who are served in faith-based, for-profit and non-profit programs.

The vast majority of Ohio kids who receive publicly funded early childhood experiences do so through child care programs. Ohio provides publically funded child care to children of working parents living at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level and they may stay in the program until they are over 300%. The extent of child care services is determined by the parents' work schedule, ranging from hourly care to over 60 hours per week, and parents' financial contribution is determined by income level.

All children deserve the best possible start in life, regardless of their family income.

Child care for infants-4-year-olds provides a critical opportunity to affect kids during the most important period of development, in addition to a necessary support for working families. Over the last several years, the child care program regulated by ODJFS has evolved from a traditional work support into quality early learning educational, curriculum-based programming that supports kindergarten readiness.

Our members also provide care and education before and after school hours to help support the extended learning and care needs of working low income families with children in elementary school.

As you may know, there is a state mandate that all child care programs serving Ohio's publically funded children must be quality rated in Ohio's Step Up to Quality Program by July 1, 2020 and highly rated by July 1, 2025. We are very supportive of these goals and encourage the State to focus all child care investments to areas that will help Ohio be successful in meeting both goals.

Currently only 57% of children in publically funded child care are being served in quality programs. There is cost associated with meeting quality measures and base provider rates have not been increased in over a decade. In order to meet the statutory 2020 goal of serving all publically funded children in quality rated centers, we need to have stability in the base rates. With the investments in HB 166 targeted towards support programs with focused intensive work to increase quality, Ohio is poised to meet that critical goal.

It is important to note that the majority of funds paying for this investment are an increased allocation of Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) funds allocated in the 2018 & 2019 Federal Appropriations Acts for the purpose of helping states become compliant with the implementation of the CCDBG Act of 2014. That Act requires equal access to quality child care assistance.

Again, these Federal funds will be used to increase base rates and help programs recruit qualified educators, invest in programs and increase quality child care access for Ohio's low income working families. This initial investment will provide a strong base for Ohio's child care programs to achieve quality and meet the 2020 goal.

As Director Hall testified previously to this committee:

"In furtherance of our commitment to Ohio's children, this budget allocates an increase of more than \$147 million in SFY 2020 and nearly \$180 million in SFY 2021 for child care providers. The additional investment has three components:

- More than \$83 million per year to bring payment rates for providers up to market rate. This adjustment will allow families to have access to at least 25% of all providers in their area.
- More than \$61 million in SFY 2020 and \$87 million in SFY 2021 to help fund enhanced payments to Step Up to Quality providers as they move up the rating scale.
- \$1.5 million in SFY 2020 and \$2.5 million in SFY 2021 for payments to providers serving families with incomes between 200 and 300 percent of the federal poverty level."

On behalf of OACCP, we support these provisions in HB 166. They are critical to support Ohio's most precious assets: our children. Thank you again for the opportunity to share our support for the child care provisions of HB 166. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.