

Ohio House of Representatives
Finance Committee
House Bill 110
Scarlett Hilton
Hilton Daycare
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Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Crawley and members of the committee, my name is Scarlett Hilton and I am the owner, operator, director and teacher at Hilton Daycare, a small home daycare in Sabina, Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony expressing my support for expanding the initial child care eligibility to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level in House Bill 110.

In my county, Clinton County Ohio, I am one of seven licensed home childcare providers who can accept childcare subsidy payments. As a childcare provider, I can tell you that many families in my area are not working because they cannot afford childcare. Many would make just above the current income limits, and would need to pay out everything they make in child care tuition.

Providing more families with options to work with quality, reliable childcare at a rate they can afford will mean getting more people out of poverty, possibly off of food stamps and other services, saving money and providing a larger tax base in return. We simply cannot work our way out of the Covid-19 economy crisis without providing affordable, quality childcare.

As it stands now, Ohio's eligibility rate ranks among the lowest in the country, tying at number 48 with Nevada and Nebraska. This means that a working single mother with two young children can only qualify for publicly funded child care if she is making less than \$28,236 (\$13.57 per hour) annually. Expanding to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) would allow a single mother making less than \$32,580 (\$15.66/hour) annually to have access to affordable, quality child care without spending nearly 50% of her income on child care, which is currently estimated at over \$16,000 per year for two young children who do not qualify for publicly funded child care. It is also worth noting that even with the modest increase provided in the as-introduced version of the state biennial budget (HB 110) to 138% of the FPL, Ohio would only move one ahead of Nevada and Nebraska, as the majority of states currently have an eligibility rate higher than 150% of the FPL.

For all the reasons stated above, I am respectfully urging you to consider expanding initial eligibility for the publicly funded child care subsidy from 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 150% of the FPL as provided in HB 110. The pandemic has made clear now more than ever that if we want to have a thriving economy, we need increased access to quality child care so that parents and caregivers can return to work and stay on the job. Now is the time for us to double down on our commitment to Ohio's youngest and most vulnerable children, as well as the families who support them. The Ohio General Assembly has the opportunity to keep Ohioans working and businesses operating, help families break out of poverty, and ensure more Ohio children have access to high-quality early learning by expanding access to quality and affordable child care.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today and please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly if you have any questions.