



BCDI
Black Child Development Institute
CLEVELAND

Ohio Senate

Finance Committee

House Bill 110

Ava T. Lucky, MSW, LSW

Black Child Development Institute, Cleveland Affiliate

Thursday, May 6, 2021

Chairman Matt Dolan, Vice Chair Theresa Gavarone, Ranking Member Vernon Sykes, and members of the committee, my name is Ava Lucky, and I am the Co-Vice President and Policy Chair for the Black Child Development Institute, Cleveland Affiliate. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 110, Ohio's FY 2022—2023 budget bill as it relates to investments in evidenced based home visiting and accessible child care.

For more than 50 years, the National Black Child Development Institute has been at the forefront of engaging leaders, policymakers, professionals and parents around critical and timely issues, such as equitable access to high-quality childcare that impacts Black children and families, low-income children and families. The National Black Child Development Institute and Ohio's affiliate, the Black Child Development Institute, Cleveland (BCDI—Cleveland), is in support of access to affordable quality childcare for children, families and providers of childcare services to meet the needs of all children, specifically supporting access to child care for low-income working families. BCDI Cleveland is committed to supporting the financial needs of working parents and the success of our children by ensuring they have access to high-quality early childhood education.

The Black Child Development Institute, Cleveland Affiliate is testifying today as an interested party to House Bill 110 to sustain and protect the current levels of state and federal investments concerning Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) and to increase the state investment in Ohio's Step Up to Quality 5-star rating system, to support the increased cost of program operations experienced as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic, and to recover the

capacity that has been lost as a result of COVID-19, ensuring that the system has sustainable funding mechanisms throughout the FY22-23 budget.

BCDI Cleveland supports Groundwork Ohio's efforts to expand initial eligibility for publicly funded childcare from 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 200% FPL (which would support a family of three making \$43,440 or less) to keep Ohio working by helping parents afford childcare and to ensure that more children in low-income families have access to high quality care.

BCDI Cleveland further supports Groundwork Ohio's petition to amend publicly funded childcare eligibility expansion to 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This amendment will expand eligibility for the publicly funded childcare subsidy from current subsidy of 130% of the FPL to 150% of the FPL. HB 110 as introduced expanded the subsidy from 130% FPL to 138% FPL. BCDI Cleveland also believes that this proposal is too modest of an increase to provide meaningful relief to low-income working families. The anticipated cost of the move from 138% FPL to 150% FPL would be between \$50 and \$75 million over the biennium. BCDI Cleveland supports Groundwork Ohio's ask that the amendment increase the FY 22-23 budget line item by an additional \$50M in GRF. By increasing the subsidy to 150% of the FPL, we estimate this investment would serve at least 14,000 more children in publicly funded childcare.

As a direct support to the community, BCDI Cleveland experiences first-hand the impact that lack of access for low-income families to high-quality childcare for their children, due to the cost childcare creates on a family's limited budget. This impact has adversely effected child care owners and family child care providers as they struggle to meet the needs of parents and maintain their main source of income. The lack of access to affordable, quality childcare remains one of the top barriers for low-income working families. Lack of access to childcare is a barrier towards employment for parents whether it be obtaining employment or maintaining employment. Parent's employment is jeopardized when they are forced to leave work due to not having reliable childcare, face losing their job, or even turning down employment opportunities simply because they do not have childcare. You can't receive childcare assistance when you are not working. And when you are working the current eligibility for publicly funded childcare pushes working low-income parents out of the financial reach for these supports. The other reality created for these families that do not have access to quality childcare is the safety of their children. Families that cannot afford childcare are forced to compromise safety, and a developmentally appropriate learning environment when paying for it is simply out of their reach.

Investing in our low-income family's ability to place their children in safe, enriching high quality childcare is a public investment. When low-income working-class families do not have access to affordable high-quality childcare, the socioeconomic, racial and ethnic inequities are exacerbated. High quality early care and education promotes children's development and learning. It also narrows socioeconomic and racial/ethnic inequalities. Reliable, affordable childcare supports Ohio families, promoting parental employment and family self-sufficiency. Finally, early care and education is a necessary component of the economic infrastructure, and

the Black Child Development Institute—Cleveland Affiliate supports Groundwork Ohio’s efforts to stand up for low-income working families, advocating for the high-quality, developmentally appropriate, stimulating, and safe childcare environments for their children in which they simply cannot afford under the current proposed expansion amendment.

Chairman Oelslager, this concludes my testimony. I greatly appreciate your time and would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

The Black Child Development Institute—Cleveland Affiliate
Gloria Blevins, President
Ava T. Lucky, Co-Vice President
Robyn Gibson, Co-Vice President

P.O. Box 22875
Beachwood, Ohio 44122

(216) 464-3507
cleveland@affiliates.nbcdi.org