



Representative Melanie Miller
Ohio House District 67

House Ways & Means Committee
House Bill 118 – Sponsor Testimony
Tuesday, April 25, 2023

Chairman Roemer, Vice-Chair Merrin, Ranking Member Troy and members of the House Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 118, the companion bill to Senate Bill 39.

The Baby Products Tax Exemption Bill (HB 118) recognizes the challenges Ohio families face in raising children and aims to alleviate their financial burden. By providing tax exemptions for essential baby products, we hope to encourage people to stay in Ohio as we work to invest in our families.

Today, I would like to share some of my observations regarding the challenges a mom and dad face when raising a newborn.

I have served as the Executive Director of the Ashland Pregnancy Care Center for the past eight years. I see first-hand the financial challenges families face when bringing home a new baby.

Consider for just a moment, the number of diapers a baby requires in the first few years.

- Newborns go through an average of 10 to 12 diapers per day. That's nearly 70 diapers per week or 280 diapers per month. ⁱ
- Babies will need about 3,000 diapers for the first year and will use roughly 6,000 diapers in their first 2 years of life. ⁱⁱ
- Disposable diapers cost about \$70 to \$80 per month, averaging out to about 30 cents each. The cost will vary depending on the brand used and where purchased. This totals about \$840 to \$960 per year per child. ⁱⁱⁱ

Some of the biggest costs for new parents include healthcare (including birth), diapers and wipes, formula, childcare, baby gear, clothes, food, and toys. In fact, families can anticipate spending between \$9,300 and \$23,380 per year per child. ^{iv}

A middle-income family can expect to spend an average of \$13,000 on their child per year, according to the most recent U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) report from 2017. However, that number has risen to about \$18,270 a year — or about \$1,522 a month — thanks to inflation (according to 2022 figures from the Brookings Institution). That's a 9 percent increase, and the total doesn't factor in the cost of giving birth.

Parents today also report spending about 27 percent of their total income on their baby, according to a survey conducted by Everyday Health Group – Pregnancy and Parenting from August 8 to 21, 2022 on BabyCenter and What to Expect websites and apps. And sadly, more than half (54 percent) of the 1,515 respondents — who are pregnant or have babies up to 1 year old — say they’re worried about managing a family budget and daily expenses due to inflation. ^v

The bill proposes to create a sales and use tax exemption for certain baby products, including children’s diapers, car seats, cribs, strollers, baby carriers, and baby monitors. The exemption will ease the financial burden on Ohio families raising children. The elimination of sales tax on these products will help ensure that Ohio families have access to the essential items necessary for the health and well-being of their children. This bill represents a positive step towards supporting Ohio families and improving the lives of young children with this financial relief when taxes and inflations have been burdensome for Ohioans.

Thank you once again, Chairman Roemer and the members of the committee for the opportunity to present this issue to you today. My colleague and I will be glad to answer any questions at this time.

ⁱ <https://www.munchkin.com/blog/how-many-diapers-do-i-need-for-a-newborn/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.babylist.com/hello-baby/how-many-diapers-babys-first-year>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.babycenter.com/family/money/top-baby-costs>

^{iv} <https://www.pampers.com/en-us/baby/diapering/article/how-many-newborn-diapers-do-you-need>

^v <https://www.whattoexpect.com/getting-pregnant/preparing-for-baby/work-and-finance/what-babies-really-cost.aspx>