

**HEALTHY  
MOMS.  
STRONG  
BABIES.**



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Electronic Mail

Chairman Roemer, Vice Chair Merrin, Ranking Member Troy, and Member of the House Ways and Means Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on H.B.118, Baby Product Tax Exemption Bill, and to share our thoughts on how to enhance the benefits this bill will provide to families with a new infant. I am Bianca Zarders, the Ohio Manager of Maternal and Infant Health Initiatives from the March of Dimes. For 85 years, the March of Dimes has led the fight for the health of all moms and babies. We continue that fight today as we work to address issues affecting moms and babies through research, education, programs, and advocacy.

March of Dimes supports H.B. 118, Baby Product Tax Exemption Bill, and the proposed sales tax exemption for children's diapers, child restraints devices or booster seats, baby carriers, strollers, cribs, and baby monitors. Similar legislation has already passed in 18 state legislatures across the United States.<sup>i</sup>

March of Dimes encourages the committee to expand the tax exemption to include breastfeeding supplies including bottles, breast pumps, breastmilk storage items, and nursing pads. By adding these essential supplies, new mothers who choose to breastfeed will not face a financial barrier. In the United States, fifteen states have passed legislation to provide full or partial sales tax exemptions on breastfeeding pumps and associated products.<sup>ii</sup> In addition, Ohio does not impose sales tax on formula products due to its classification as a food product. Breast milk is an essential food source for infants in Ohio, which should not face a higher tax burden than infant formula. We believe that eliminating this tax from baby products will positively impact families as they navigate the endless expenses of having a child.

In Ohio, we need to continue to fight for the moms and babies of our state. In 2020, there were 129,921 live births in Ohio.<sup>iii</sup> In the 2022 March of Dimes Report Card, Ohio received a D+ for our state's rate of preterm births.<sup>iv</sup> In fact, one in nine babies are born prematurely in Ohio. In a 2022 March of Dimes report on maternity care, 14.8% of Ohio counties were identified as areas without a hospital or birth centers offering obstetric care or with obstetric providers.<sup>v</sup> We need to do better for moms and babies in Ohio. This bill, H.B. 118, decreases the financial burdens and needless financial obstacles of essential products for the families of the 129,921 babies born in Ohio each year.

March of Dimes thanks the committee for focusing attention on these important public health challenges. As we continue to work on advancing new policies, we must continue to invest in the

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programs already in our toolbox to improve the health of mothers, infants, and families. March of Dimes stands ready to work with you to achieve that change.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me. We look forward to partnering with you for the benefit of Ohio's moms and babies!

Sincerely,  
s/ Bianca Zarders

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<sup>i</sup> <https://nationaldiaperbanknetwork.org/diaper-tax/>

<sup>ii</sup> [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cab7e5ee666690a011d73b1/t/5e4d1d5752fddc1ff445a184/1582112087905/Taxability+by+State+\\_+P4P.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cab7e5ee666690a011d73b1/t/5e4d1d5752fddc1ff445a184/1582112087905/Taxability+by+State+_+P4P.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/data?reg=99&top=2&stop=1&lev=1&slev=4&obj=1&sreg=39>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/reports/ohio/report-card>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.marchofdimes.org/peristats/reports/united-states/maternity-care-deserts>