



Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies

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Testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee May 23, 2023

Philip E. Cole
Executive Director
Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies

Good afternoon Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Merrin, Ranking Member Troy, and members of the House Ways and Means Committee. I am Phil Cole, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies. I thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of H.B. 118.

The Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies represents Ohio's forty-eight Community Action Agencies serving every county in Ohio. Community Action Agencies are the primary providers of services to eliminate poverty and to assist those who suffer its ravages as they work to become self-sufficient. We provide a variety of services to our low-income customers including job training and placement, Head Start, affordable housing, health care, transportation, home weatherization, rent assistance and many others. Prior to COVID, Community Action Agencies served over 600,000 individuals with revenues over half billion dollars each year. We also employed over 8,500 people. COVID dramatically increased all of our numbers, but the pre-COVID numbers are more realistic.

As we reviewed H.B. 118, we believe it to be a simple way to relieve some of the financial burden on new parents and families, especially low-income families. For example, the cost of diapers for the average child in their first year of life can be around \$1,000 depending on variables like brand and bulk purchasing. Eliminating the sales tax from the purchase of diapers alone will be a big benefit for families. We cannot overlook the good benefit in sales tax exemption of the other items included in this legislation like cribs, car seats, strollers and other things. Making those items more affordable is good for children and families in our State. We see H.B. 118 as a common sense initiative from the General Assembly to new families. It is good legislation.

We commend Reps. Santucci and Miller for this legislation and urge its passage.

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