

Good morning Chair Rulli, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member DeMora and members of the Senate General Government Committee. My name is Beryl Brown Piccolantonio and I have the incredible honor of serving as the school board president in the Gahanna-Jefferson city school district. This testimony is not on behalf of my board or district, but on behalf of myself and speaking only for myself, an Ohio mom. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 114.

Just like many of you, I have many different titles, but the one that always comes first is the title “mom”. My husband and I have three wonderful children who are now old enough that we do not need childcare. However, when I first ran for election to my local school board in 2013, our children were ages three (3), seven (7), and nine (9). Running for local office was an incredible experience, but one of the most difficult aspects of it was navigating childcare. My husband and I both worked full-time outside of the house so we had regular daytime childcare, but the added cost of additional childcare so that I could campaign effectively was a lot to manage.

We were lucky that we were able to find solutions that worked for us, but for many, this cost is a barrier to running for office. I have had many conversations with potential candidates over the years and, in my conversations with both moms and dads of young children, figuring out how to manage the logistics of campaigning and serving while raising children is the number one issue that holds people back from public service. It is critical that the perspective of those who are living the experience of raising young children is represented at all levels of government.

This legislation would help remove one barrier for those individuals by allowing campaign funds to be used for childcare expenses.

My understanding is that there are already 30 states that have authorized campaign funds to be used for childcare expenses and that use of campaign funds for childcare is also permitted at the federal level. I think it’s time Ohio joined that list. I am particularly supportive of this bill because it comes at no cost to the taxpayers of Ohio and will help all parents who might choose to run for public office. It is a commonsense solution to removing one barrier to service and it has bipartisan support.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify and for your time and consideration. I urge the Ohio Senate General Government Committee to support HB114 and vote it favorably out of committee. I apologize that I am not able to be there in person to testify, but please reach out to me with any questions you might have.