

Elsa Munoz
Type A Childcare
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Testimony on House Bill 96

Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on HB 96. My name is **Elsa Munoz**, and I run a family child care business in Campbell, Ohio. I also represent the CEO Project. Today, I am here to ask for your support for Ohio's children, families, and childcare providers by including the childcare improvements outlined in Governor DeWine's executive budget, specifically raising eligibility for childcare assistance and funding the federally required changes to copay caps and reimbursing based on enrollment.

For the past 9 years, I have been providing early childhood care, and before that, I worked for 15 years as a social worker with children's services in the county. Throughout my experience, I've seen how critical affordable and reliable childcare is to the well-being of families, especially low-income ones. However, the current eligibility thresholds of 140% to 160% of the federal poverty level are not enough to support many families. I've witnessed firsthand how parents are denied assistance for being just a small amount over the income limit—sometimes only \$10—and this hurts families who are already struggling.

Over the past six months, I've worked with numerous single mothers who are balancing work, school, and the high costs of childcare. These parents are working hard to make ends meet, but the current system simply isn't helping them. As a community advocate and business owner, I see the challenges parents face every day, especially when they cannot access affordable childcare. Many parents need flexible hours, but the system doesn't always accommodate those needs.

I run a Type A licensed childcare center, and we're open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide care for parents who work non-traditional hours. Our center has a capacity of 12 children per shift, but when parents are unable to bring their children in, I still have to pay my employees and cover overhead costs. This puts a significant financial strain on my small business.

Switching from an attendance policy to an enrollment policy would greatly help ease this burden. It would allow childcare centers like mine to plan more effectively, reduce financial risks, and better support parents. Small businesses in this industry operate on tight margins, and

we're not in this to make millions. We're here to serve families who need care, and we need policies that make it easier for us to do so.

Raising eligibility for childcare assistance, as well as making necessary changes to copay caps and reimbursement policies, will ensure that both families and childcare providers can thrive. By improving these policies, we can help parents get the support they need to stay employed, while ensuring that childcare providers can continue to offer high-quality care.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.