

Tarrezz Thompson
Tarrezz Thompson-FCC
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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 Tarrezz Thompson, I run a family home based type B program in Columbus and I represent the CEO Project. I am here to ask that you support Ohio kids, families, and childcare providers by including the childcare improvements outlined in Governor DeWine's executive budget, including investing in childcare as the workforce behind the workforce.

As a childcare provider in Franklin County, I believe one the most transitional ways is by moving away from the current market rate survey and into a cost model system to operate within the true cost of care. As a business owner and a resource in the community for over 14 years, I have seen how the needs of the community and the children we serve shift to a demand higher than preparation for kindergarten. Our children are needing more intentional learning experiences to close development gaps which require higher trained and certified staff. The current model does not account for the investment in training, cost of goods increasing, and livable wages needing to match the increasing cost of living. Under a cost model system, the state would have a better picture of the true cost for care and the real investment that's needed to support its future citizens.

As a program who identified as an inclusion program, I've invested in multiple families with a child with identified and unidentified disabilities. In service, each child has a unique need to create a least restrictive environment. Although the recent increases have created mild relief, the truth of the challenge is there needs to be a system that creates a whole picture of the cost of care for all services including inclusion programs. Financial decisions for eligibility and reimbursement are based on archaic numbers that historically result in low investment in the workforce that supports the workforce. When considering the budget, I'm asking you to consider the tools that are identifying the cost of operations of the very businesses that make it possible for workers to work.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.