

Proponent Testimony for House Bill 96
House Children and Human Services Committee
Chris Burns, Manager, Encore Technologies
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Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and members of the House Children and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of the Governor's proposal for the expansion of home visitation services in Ohio. My name is Chris Burns. I am an executive with Encore Technologies, a privately-owned, full service data and IT solutions company.

As a businessman, parent, and grandparent helping to raise two young grandsons, I know first-hand the challenges and cost of raising young children today. Having extra hands to ensure they get transported to childcare or school, the doctor's office, and proper nutrition, are just a few of the needs we help with every week.

I don't know where they would be without that help. Many households today don't have the luxury of relatives and friends. Without that critical support, we know their chances of making it in life are greatly reduced.

From a business standpoint, when single parents and guardians have to go it alone, it eventually leads to reduced focus at work, lower productivity, and lost wages. That adds up to a major cost for Ohio.

With the Help Me Grow home visitation program, women who participated in Home Visiting had:

1. 48% fewer low birth weight babies.
2. 25% increasing children's reading and math achievement tests.
3. The caregivers were more focused and productive at work.

The business ROI on investing government funds early in life is between 7-13 percent. This is one of the best investments that Ohio can make. Research clearly shows that it will save tens of millions on the backend when these students have graduated and begin paying into the system, while their caregivers are working.

Home visiting is what we like to call the icing on the cake. All the other support systems are important, but this one takes it to another level. When the primary issues are covered, the parents are focused and productive and their children are learning. We owe it to them to ensure that as many families as possible can benefit from the home visitation program. In summary, we see this request as a no-brainer.

Thank you for your time.