

Shelley Hill  
Constituent of Ohio, wife, mother

March 3, 2025

Ohio House Children and Human Services Committee

Chairperson White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and Members of the House Finance Committee:

My name is Shelley Hill, and I am a wife and mother residing in Mount Sterling. I am writing to urge the prioritization of critical investments in early childhood programs in Ohio's FY2026-27 state budget, House Bill 96.

My husband and I moved to Ohio with our three young children two years ago. My husband was beginning a new job, and the move required resignation from my full-time job of almost five years and loss of all our medical benefits. I began intermittent, contractual work during my children's naptime, knowing that finding another full-time job would not only be difficult, but also require that I thoughtfully weigh the tradeoff between salary and childcare costs. As a family we have struggled not only finding childcare that has the capacity to care for our children, but also the high cost of high-quality childcare.

In 2021, when I still had a full-time job, we found out we were expecting twins. With a toddler already in daycare, we were worried about how we would afford to have three kids in childcare. Our childcare provider informed us that she would not have the capacity to take on two infants at that time, nor would we be able to afford the expense of having all our children in childcare. We navigated that stressful time the best we could as my husband had a full-time work-from-home job and cared for one of our infants full-time while the other infant attended daycare with our toddler, and I went to work for the day. We look back on that time and wonder how we got through as two full-time working parents with three children, three years old and under, when only two of them attended daycare three days a week.

Please let me stress this point: As two full-time working parents, my husband and I could hardly afford to send two out of three children to daycare three days a week.

Now living in Ohio since 2023, I can say that our situation has not changed much regarding finding and affording childcare. Our eldest child is now in kindergarten, but my husband and I still cannot afford to send our twins to daycare full-time. We have patch-worked a solution by hiring three different babysitters to come to our house to care for our two younger children while my husband and I work full-time.

There is no denying that there is a childcare crisis in our state and in our country. I stand by the work and advocacy efforts of Groundwork Ohio as they strive to support working families with young children. As a working parent with young children, I ask you to consider investing in the following areas:

- Increasing access to affordable, quality childcare for working families to 200% of the FPL, and
- Implementing a refundable child tax credit for working parents with young children.

These policies pay long-term dividends in Ohio's future. Our children are Ohio's future parents, workforce, and voting constituents. It is my hope and prayer that my children will be able to look back and see that their mom advocated and fought on their behalf to give them the best chance at a fruitful and purposeful life. Our children will grow up and see how much the generations before them valued and cared for them based on the actions we take today to give them the best opportunities and the best future.

Thank you for your time and commitment to Ohio's children and families!

Best,

Shelley Hill