

Rachel Selby

Adoptive Mother

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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 Rachel Selby, and I am an adoptive mother and advocate.

I am here today to urge you to prioritize critical investments in early childhood programs, in Ohio's FY2026-27 state budget, House Bill 96. As a working, single mother who unexpectedly took on a sixth child as a kinship placement—biologically related to my other adopted children—I understand firsthand how crucial it is to support young children and the families that care for them.

This infant, who came to me from a background of poverty with no income and no family able to meet her needs, was not eligible for fully funded childcare. Why? Childcare is a critical infrastructure for working parents—just as vital as water and roads to the workforce. I was shocked to learn that Ohio has not invested in children like her and I was forced to leave full time employment because my application for her childcare was denied.

If our state can afford to spend 180M on sports stadiums or 4.8M on solar projects in this next budget, we can afford to fully fund childcare for babies and toddlers of foster or kinship care. This is something every tax payer I have ever spoken to agrees with.

I understand that you have many competing interests and requests for a state budget with limited resources. However, I urge you to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable children are met, particularly by providing access to quality early childhood education and care. Please be reminded, these children cannot speak for themselves, but they are counting on you. Thank you for your time and commitment to Ohio's children and families. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely, Rachel Selby