

March 18, 2025

The Honorable Andrea White, Chair  
Ohio House Children and Human Services Committee  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

**RE: House Bill 2 (Establish Child Care Cred Program) & House Bill 41 (Establish Child Care Grant Programs – Learning Labs and Increase Capacity)**

Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and Members of the House Children and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony on House Bills 2 and 41.

The Ohio Business Roundtable (OBRT) is a statewide business association comprised of CEOs and Presidents of the top companies in the state. We currently have over 125 members, collectively employing over 600,000 Ohioans and generating a revenue of more than \$2.5 trillion, which contributes significantly to Ohio's economy.

Our membership includes industry leading companies representing over 20 Ohio industries, including—but not limited to—companies such as KeyBank and Huntington in the banking sector; American Financial and Nationwide in the insurance sector; Kokosing in construction; CareSource, Cleveland Clinic, and many of Ohio's children's hospitals in healthcare; The Ohio State University and Miami University in higher education; Owens Corning, The J.M. Smucker Company, Cardinal Health, and Cintas in manufacturing; AEP and Marathon in energy and utilities, among others.

At OBRT, we advocate for policies that strengthen Ohio's workforce and business environment. A reliable, skilled workforce is the foundation of economic growth, yet one of the biggest barriers to workforce participation is the lack of child care. When working parents cannot find care, businesses struggle with absenteeism, turnover, and lost productivity—costing the U.S. economy an estimated \$122 billion annually.<sup>1</sup> Affordability also poses a significant barrier with the average cost of child care for two children exceeding the average rent in all 50 states and surpassing mortgage costs in 45 states.<sup>2</sup> In 39 states, infant child care costs more than in-state college tuition.<sup>2</sup>

If Ohio is to remain competitive in attracting and retaining talent, we must expand child care options to ensure parents can fully participate in the workforce. From public-private partnerships to near-site child care offerings, OBRT members are seeking new and innovative ways to support employees and their families.



House Bills 2 and 41 represent practical, business-friendly solutions that align with OBRT's goals of fostering economic growth, workforce participation, and public-private collaboration.

- House Bill 2 (Child Care Cred Program) introduces a tri-share model where child care costs are shared equally among employers, employees, and the state—easing financial burdens on working parents and incentivizing business participation.
- House Bill 41 establishes employer toolkits, a grant fund, and learning labs to support near-site child care solutions—enabling businesses to invest in workforce stability and talent retention.

OBRT commends the bill sponsors for their leadership in recognizing that high-quality early childhood education is an economic imperative. Research has consistently shown that investment in early childhood programs leads to long-term workforce readiness, higher lifetime earnings, and economic mobility.<sup>3</sup> By passing these bills, Ohio will take a critical step toward making child care more accessible and affordable—strengthening our workforce, supporting families, and ensuring our state remains a top destination for business investment.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Nikki Cooper  
Vice President of Business Engagement & External Affairs  
Ohio Business Roundtable

<sup>1</sup> Bishop, S. (2023). *\$122 billion: The growing, annual cost of the infant-toddler child care crisis*. ReadyNation. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from <https://www.strongnation.org/articles/2038-122-billion-the-growing-annual-cost-of-the-infant-toddler-child-care-crisis/>

<sup>2</sup> *Child Care at a Standstill: Price and Landscape Analysis*. (2024). Child Care Aware® of America. Retrieved March 14, 2025, from <https://www.childcareaware.org/thechildcarestandstill/>

<sup>3</sup> *Lifelong Gains*. (2024). First Five Years Fund. <https://www.ffyf.org/by-topic/lifelong-gains/>