

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. My name is Kelly Ullman, and I write to express my strong support for House Bill 2, which establishes the Child Care Cred Program to help working families like mine afford quality childcare.

I am a senior buyer for a local retail company in Central Ohio and my husband and I both work full time. We live in Westerville and are raising two young children—our two-year-old son and our infant, born in December. While we love our growing family, we have had to make difficult financial decisions due to the high cost of childcare.

Currently, childcare for two young children costs more than our mortgage. This is an unsustainable burden that forces many parents to make impossible choices. My family feels the financial strain of childcare deeply, and we are not alone. Across Ohio, families are making difficult trade-offs—whether it's cutting back on work hours, delaying career advancement, or, in some cases, leaving the workforce entirely because childcare is simply too expensive.

We would love to have another child, but we cannot afford three children in daycare at the same time. The only realistic option is to wait until our oldest is school-aged before even considering growing our family. Unfortunately, this is the reality for many parents who are forced to plan their families around financial constraints rather than what is best for them. The burden of childcare costs disproportionately impacts mothers, many of whom are forced to leave their careers or reduce their hours because nearly all of their income would go directly toward daycare. I know friends who have had to make this exact decision—not because they wanted to leave their jobs, but because the numbers simply didn't add up.

House Bill 2 is a practical, bipartisan solution that benefits families, businesses, and the Ohio economy by addressing this crisis. This program creates a shared model, dividing childcare costs among employees, employers, and the state, making quality care more affordable. Instead of families bearing this overwhelming financial burden alone, HB 2 ensures that businesses and the state have a stake in supporting working parents.

This program will also help keep parents in the workforce. Ohio cannot afford to lose talented professionals simply because the cost of childcare forces them to step away. By making childcare more accessible, we allow parents to continue contributing to the economy while ensuring businesses have the employees they need to thrive. Additionally, this bill will provide stability for childcare providers, many of whom are struggling to stay open due to low reimbursement rates and financial uncertainty. By strengthening the childcare industry, we ensure that families have access to high-quality, reliable early education for their children.

This bill isn't about handouts—it's about investing in working families and securing the future of Ohio's workforce. For families like mine, this support is not just helpful—it is essential.

I urge this committee to support House Bill 2, which would allow working parents to provide for their families without sacrificing their careers. This program would make a meaningful difference for thousands of Ohioans struggling with the rising cost of childcare.

Thank you for your time and consideration.