



Testimony on House Bill 647

Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 647. My name is Heidi Wilson and I am here on behalf of the Ohio Alliance of YMCAs and the Ohio Association of Child Care Providers (OACCP).

The Ohio Alliance of YMCAs is a nonprofit organization that represents Ohio's YMCAs. Ohio YMCAs are in 164 communities around the state, and serve 1.9 million Ohioans, both children and adults. Ohio YMCAs are the largest childcare provider in Ohio, providing care for over 250,000 children each year.

OACCP represents providers across the state who are committed to safe, high-quality care for children and reliable services for working families. Our mission is to elevate the child care profession, ensure responsible stewardship of public resources, and partner with policymakers to build a system that is accessible, accountable, and sustainable for Ohio communities. OACCP represents the Directors and Business Owners of over 600 licensed child care centers. Our members educate and care for over 50,000 of Ohio's youngest citizens,

I am here to share concerns regarding the bill's potential impacts on program stability, due process, and access to care for Ohio's families. While the intent of HB 647 is to strengthen program integrity, the bill—as introduced—creates serious risks of unintended harm.

Child care providers are the workforce behind the workforce. We care for and educate children so parents can work. Our members are heavily regulated as they should be, however, providers face significant challenges.

Child care providers across Ohio face significant daily challenges that affect their ability to serve families and maintain program stability. Ongoing instability in funding streams — including changes in public funding levels, timing, and eligibility requirements — creates uncertainty that makes long-term planning difficult for providers. Operating expenses continue to rise and are fixed costs regardless of student attendance, placing additional strain on already tight budgets. Programs struggle with persistent workforce shortages driven by low wages, limited access to benefits, and competition from higher-paying sectors. These pressures are especially acute in rural and underserved communities, where the closure of even one program can leave families without viable care options.

Ohio already operates one of the strongest, most sophisticated fraud detection systems in the nation, and any change to statute should be guided by demonstrated need and carefully tailored to protect both children and the providers who serve them.

Ohio's Current Fraud Prevention System Is Already Highly Effective

Ohio's child care attendance and verification system is regarded as one of the most robust in the country, using parent identity verification via PIN, photo capture and ongoing state review. Our centers receive both surprise visits from DCY and onsite review today.

1. HB 647 Expands License Suspension and Payment Withholding Authority Without Due Process

The bill permits immediate suspension of licenses and payments based on undefined "reason to suspect" violations, risking shutdowns over routine administrative errors and jeopardizing family access to care.

2. The Bill Weakens Due Process and Lacks Clear Safeguards

HB 647 does not define evidentiary standards, appeal procedures, or timelines for resolution, exposing providers to closure based on incomplete or misinterpreted data.

3. Temporary Dual Authorization Poses Risks to Family Stability

The bill makes dual authorization temporary without outlining protections for families who rely on it, raising concerns about service gaps.

Conclusion

Ohio's childcare system depends on stability, clarity, and fairness. We respectfully request that the bill be refined to: strengthen due-process protections, ensure statutory changes are evidence-based and that the dual authorization be allowed in certain circumstances with appropriate oversight.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.