

Written Testimony of Chris Angellatta, Ph.D.  
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Before The Ohio Legislature - 136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly  
House Committee on Children and Human Services

Testimony on: House Bill 647 “Regards publicly funded child care, the Child Care Cred  
Program”

Tuesday March 3, 2026. 11:00am  
Room 116, The Ohio Statehouse

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association, our statewide members, and governing board regarding House Bill 647. We provide technical assistance to child care providers, conduct training and professional development for professionals, and coordinate statewide quality initiatives. Together, we represent the statewide network of child care resource and referral organizations serving all 88 counties in Ohio.

We share the General Assembly’s commitment to safeguarding public funds and ensuring accountability within Ohio’s publicly funded child care system. Ohio already operates one of the strongest fraud detection and oversight systems in the country, and we support evidence-based efforts to strengthen program integrity. However, as currently drafted, House Bill 647 raises serious concerns related to due process, provider stability, and family access to care, concerns that, if left unaddressed, risk undermining the very system that working families and employers rely upon.

We suggest the following critical changes for your consideration:

1. Narrow and Clearly Define Fraud-Based Closure Authority

Define “misuse of public funds” in statute, distinguishing clearly between intentional fraud, and administrative or billing errors that occur in large systems to prevent programs from being closed for non-fraudulent mistakes.

Replace the “reason to suspect” standard with a higher evidentiary threshold (e.g., documented evidence, preliminary findings or standard of knowing) before a license suspension or contract termination can occur.

Limit summary suspension and program closure authority to cases involving immediate threats to child health or safety, not financial allegations alone so that suspected billing issues are not equated with a child's death or serious injury. Summary suspensions and program closures, without evidence, would threaten the loss of care for all children served by the provider. These decisions would destabilize employment and economic stability for families in the general workforce.

## 2. Restore Due Process and Appeal Rights for Providers

Restore administrative appeal and hearing rights for providers facing suspension, termination, or recovery actions related to publicly funded child care, rather than making such decisions final and unreviewable.

Require written notice and explanation of the specific evidence relied upon, the alleged violation, and the corrective options available before closure occurs.

Protect families from abrupt loss of care by requiring transition plans or temporary continuity measures when a program is under investigation, but no final fraud determination has been made.

Establish clear timelines for investigation, review, reinstatement, or resolution so programs are not left closed indefinitely based on unresolved suspicions.

## 3. Maintain and Clarify Dual Authorization for Families

Remove the temporary limitation on dual authorization and instead codify it as an ongoing option for families who legitimately need more than one provider to meet work, education, or non-traditional hour needs.

Explicitly recognize common dual-care scenarios, including split shifts or non-traditional work hours, provider closures on school-off or calamity days, and blended care arrangements needed for continuity and stability.

Require advance policy guidance and transition planning if any future changes to dual authorization are contemplated, to avoid gaps in eligibility or sudden service disruptions.

## 5. Align HB 647 With Existing, Effective Oversight Systems

Acknowledge and preserve Ohio's strong existing fraud-prevention infrastructure, which already includes unique PIN verification, geolocation requirements, photo confirmation, data analytics, attendance audits, and system generated alerts.

Ensure any new enforcement authority complements, not duplicates or destabilizes, current systems that are already correcting errors and identifying bad actors without widespread harm to families or providers.

Respectfully, we urge the legislature to pause and refine House Bill 647 to ensure it strengthens accountability without adversely affecting child care access for families or threatening the viability of responsible providers. We respectfully ask you to amend the bill to clearly define fraud, restore basic due-process protections, preserve dual authorization for families who legitimately need more than one provider, and ensure that enforcement tools are proportionate, transparent, and fair.

Ohio can, and should, protect taxpayer dollars while also protecting children, families, and the child care workforce that supports our economy. We stand ready to work with you, the bill sponsors, and the Department of Children and Youth to achieve a balanced approach, and we respectfully request that you advance House Bill 647 only with these critical changes in place.