

Constance L. Johnson
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Euclid, Ohio
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Testimony on House Bill 647

Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, Eric Synenberg, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony today on HB 647. My name is Constance Johnson, and I have been a Childcare Provider in Ohio since 1995. I oppose HB 647 due to its negative impact on providers.

As a small business owner, I support accountability and compliance, but with proper due process. HB 647 expands fraud referral mechanisms without clearly outlining safeguards or fair administrative processes for providers. A regulatory environment must be predictable, transparent, and balanced. Small businesses struggle to function or expand when enforcement rules are vague or overly harsh and are not properly and carefully reviewed. Suspending providers without due process or on unclear grounds jeopardizes our operations.

Given concerns about AI, data breaches, and predators, I am against installing cameras in my home or business without clear information on who can access the footage, how it is used, and how long it is stored. Additionally, there is little evidence of fraud in our childcare programs.

Ohio is investing \$5 million in a new data collection system yet cannot pay its childcare sector on time with a just and livable wage. If the state is modernizing systems, payment systems must be part of that upgrade. Providers are often paid late yet we still must pay staff wages, payroll, taxes, rent or mortgage, utilities, insurance and the goods to keep our business running properly. These expenses continue regardless of the attendance of an enrolled child. This bill also cuts the planned July 2028 implementation of enrollment payment over attendance and removes the parents' right to use multiple providers for non-traditional hours.

Counties must input PFCC client data into four different systems. This creates processing delays. Providers and families suffer because of backend inefficiencies. If the state is going to implement system reforms, those reforms must streamline county workflows, create one unified system, reduce duplication, speed up eligibility decisions – until recent years eligibility took 30 days, now its 90 days which is too long.

Childcare workers are the backbone of Ohio's workforce infrastructure. Without stable childcare programs, parents cannot work. Regulatory unpredictability, payment delays, and administrative burdens and weaken the entire system. If providers close, strike for a indefinite period, or stop accepting PFCC, workforce participation declines. That harms families, employers, and the state economy.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony today.

Respectfully,

Constance L. Johnson