

Subject: Formal Opposition to Ohio House Bill 647

Dear Chairperson and Committee Members,

My name is Doris Stimage, and I am the Director of Prodigious Academy, a licensed early childhood education center serving families in Columbus, Ohio. I am writing to respectfully express my opposition to Ohio House Bill 647.

While I understand the importance of maintaining quality and safety standards in childcare, I have serious concerns that the provisions within this bill could unintentionally create constitutional, operational, and financial burdens on centers like mine.

First, aspects of this bill may infringe upon First Amendment protections for both parents and staff. Any legislation that restricts speech, expression, or communication within educational environments must be carefully reviewed to ensure it does not violate constitutional rights.

Second, the bill introduces additional requirements and enforcement measures that will significantly strain already understaffed childcare centers. Ohio is currently facing a childcare workforce crisis. Many centers are operating below capacity due to staffing shortages—not due to lack of demand. Adding new compliance requirements without providing funding or workforce solutions will increase administrative strain and potentially reduce access to care for families.

Third, from a financial perspective, many small and mid-sized childcare businesses are already operating on tight margins. Increased regulatory burdens without additional funding support could force centers to raise tuition or close altogether, further limiting childcare availability in our communities.

Rather than implementing new layers of regulation, I respectfully suggest strengthening and more effectively monitoring the existing oversight systems already in place through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). ODJFS already provides licensing standards, inspections, and compliance monitoring. Enhancing resources for this system would be more practical and sustainable than creating additional mandates.

Ohio families need stability, affordability, and access to quality childcare. Policies should support—not destabilize—the providers working daily to educate and protect children across this state.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider the provisions within House Bill 647 and engage directly with childcare providers to develop solutions that strengthen—not burden—our early learning system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Doris Stimage

Director, Prodigious Academy

Columbus, Ohio