



**Interested Party Testimony HB 96
Senate Finance Committee
Catholic Conference of Ohio
May 22, 2025**

Chair Cirino, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 96. I am Dr. William Kuehnle, an associate director with the Catholic Conference of Ohio. The Catholic Conference is the official voice of the Catholic Church in Ohio on matters of public policy.

First, the Catholic Conference also asks that you recognize the challenges of families in this state. The family, which the Catholic faith considers a society unto itself preceding all others in dignity and right, struggles today with great difficulty to raise and form children. We ask this chamber to restore a family tax credit to the operating budget, providing Ohio families with a nonrefundable per-child tax credit. This investment in children will advance the stated intention of our public servants to make Ohio the best state to raise a family. Further, child tax credits embody a pro-life commitment to a culture where each child is recognized as a gift. Instituting a \$1,000 tax credit for each child in Ohio communicates that this state welcomes and values the dignity of human life, so we strongly urge you to take up this measure, which enjoys such broad, bipartisan support at the federal level.

I also want to express our gratitude to Governor DeWine and the House leadership for the support for pregnant women and their children in this budget. In addition to continued support for organizations providing resources to pregnant women in need, HB 96 establishes the Maternal and Infant Housing Assistance line-item appropriation of \$500,000 to support organizations providing housing to pregnant women and women caring for young children. We hope that this chamber will strengthen the merit of this appropriation by clarifying its purpose among the programs under the Department of Children and Youth, similar to the Ohio Parenting and Pregnancy Program.

Lastly, the Catholic Conference asks you to remember the poor and needy as you craft this budget, especially the Ohioans who rely on a Medicaid program for essential healthcare coverage. To that end, we specifically hope the Senate will ensure the youngest children in our state do not lose their coverage due to paperwork or filing errors by electing not to repeal the provision that allows for continuous Medicaid coverage for children in need from birth through age three. This is a simple way to recognize in Ohio's budget the needs of some of Ohio's most vulnerable children.