

Tarrezz Thompson-FCC  
June 6, 2025  
Testimony on House Bill 96

Chair Soreno, Vice Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hudson, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on HB 96. My name is Tarrezz Thompson. I operate and own Linique Childcare, I also represent the CEO Project.. I am here to ask that you support Ohio kids, families, and childcare providers by including the childcare improvements outlined in Governor DeWine's executive budget, including investing in childcare as the workforce behind the workforce.

I've been in this field for over 30+ years and have held every role in early education. Currently I operate as an inclusive program on the northside of Columbus from my home. Often, I'm pulling from my living expenses budget to cover the cost of operating my childcare and I'm unable to make any more sacrifices and still maintain stability for my family. I'm here because I believe governor dewine held that in mind when he wrote the portions of the budget such as increasing eligibility to 160% and including presumptive eligibility language in the budget. The reach to afford childcare is growing further and further away. Families will be forced into sacrificial decisions. In 2019, Ohio was operating with 7400 licensed programs. As of 2024, the state operated with just over 4400. That's a loss of 3,000 + accessible programs and the list is still growing. But access isn't just about increasing more affordable childcare programs. Affordable programs are beyond stretched to undertake daily operating expenses. Access is about creating stabilizing investments in current operating programs while growing back to pre pandemic levels of affordable programs along with increasing eligibility to affordable childcare for families of the state of Ohio. Families are needing assistance with childcare to combat the increasing cost of living. Presumptive eligibility assists with moving families into the workforce in a timely manner. Removal of presumptive language would greatly disproportion black/brown and

Appalachian communities. It will also cause a loss of revenue to the programs serving families who are eligible for assistance and hurts entry into the states workforce.

When considering the finalizing decisions of the budget, I'm asking you to consider keeping the investments from Governor Dewine, the cost of living working families have, and the tools that are identifying the cost of operations of the very businesses that make it possible for workers to work.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony.