



Testimony in Support of the Ohio Child Tax Credit

Ohio Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee
Presented by Will Petrik, Director of Policy & Advocacy
RISE Together Innovation Institute
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Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Weinstein, and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Will Petrik, and I serve as the Director of Policy & Advocacy at RISE Together Innovation Institute.

We are committed to ensuring that every child and every family has the resources and opportunities they need to thrive. But today, too many parents are struggling to afford basic necessities for their kids. Today, I am here to **urge you to prioritize tax relief for working families.**

The Problem: Too many families are struggling with rising costs and low-wage jobs

Parents are working hard to make ends meet. Housing, groceries, healthcare, and childcare expenses continue to rise but wages haven't kept pace. According to a recent poll from Public Opinion Strategies, 94% of parents in Ohio said "getting inflation and [the] cost of living under control" was an important concern.¹

Imagine a single parent in Columbus with two kids working a full-time job as a home health aide making \$12.25 an hour. Despite their dedication, their hourly wage has not kept pace with the rising cost to live.

The average fair market rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in Franklin County has increased from \$886/month in 2017 to \$1,302/month in 2024.² Meanwhile, seven of the ten most common jobs in the Columbus metro area don't pay enough for a renter to afford a 2-bedroom apartment.³ These jobs, including fast food, retail, home health aides, and cashiers, employ roughly 180,000

¹ "The State of Early Childhood in Ohio: 2024 Poll Results and Implications," based on poll findings from Public Opinion Strategies, slide from Groundwork Ohio webinar, January 2025, <https://bit.ly/3XiuZP>

² Will Petrik and Rob Moore, "Poverty and Economic Insecurity in Franklin County," RISE Together Innovation Institute and Scioto Analysis December 2024, <https://bit.ly/41dxSya>

³ Ibid, <https://bit.ly/4kgOeP5>



residents in the Columbus metro area alone. This is why a staggering 39% of households are struggling just to cover the basics in Franklin County.⁴

The financial stress on families has long-term consequences. Research shows that childhood poverty harms a child's health, education, and their future earnings and opportunities. Childhood poverty weakens the economy by reducing productivity and increasing costs for healthcare, social services, child welfare, and incarceration.

Proven solutions exist to provide families with relief, support communities, and give children more opportunities for a better future.

The Solution: Change the tax code to support working families

We support Governor DeWine's proposal to create a refundable Child Tax Credit (CTC), providing up to \$1,000 per child under age seven for families with incomes under \$94,000.

This proposal would provide much-needed relief to families, helping them afford essentials like gas, diapers, and groceries. In Franklin County alone, the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP) estimates 64,500 children and their families would benefit, bringing an estimated \$36 million directly into the local economy. ITEP estimates an average annual tax cut of \$940 for 38,500 households with children in Franklin County.⁵

Research shows that a little more money in people's pockets makes a difference in their lives. At the height of the pandemic, federal lawmakers expanded the federal Child Tax Credit, which expanded peace of mind for millions of families. It provided 1.2 million families in Ohio an average payment of \$442 per month for six months.⁶

The impact was immediate:

- Families had **more money to pay the rent, put gas in the car, and food on the table.**
- Fewer families in Ohio **reported that they didn't have enough to eat.**⁷
- 70% of parents said the payments **helped them better manage rising prices.**⁸
- Nationally, **child poverty fell to a record low** of 5.2% in 2021.⁹

The Economic Benefits: Strengthening Families and Boosting Local Economies

Research shows that when working families receive one-time tax refunds, they tend to spend that money locally, boosting the economy. A refundable Child Tax Credit would have the same

⁴ Ibid, <https://bit.ly/3F6ktQP>

⁵ Franklin County Child Tax Credit analysis provided by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP), email from Kamolika Das, Local Policy Director, February 25, 2025.

⁶ Will Petrik, "What's at stake for families as monthly child tax credit payment ends," Policy Matters Ohio, January 2022, <https://bit.ly/4hYIQ2U>

⁷ Will Petrik, "Expanded child tax credit immediately improved life for Ohio children and families," Policy Matters Ohio, September 2021.

<https://bit.ly/4i63AnW>

⁸ Leah Hamilton, Stephen Roll, Mathieu Despard et. al, "The impacts of the 2021 expanded child tax credit on family employment, nutrition, and financial well-being," Brookings Economy and Development Program, Brookings Institution, April 2022, <https://bit.ly/41vaZYf>

⁹ John Creamer, Emily A Shrider, Kalee Burns, and Frances Chen, "Poverty in the United States: 2021, US Census Bureau, September 2022, <https://bit.ly/4hVapZu>

effect—putting money back into communities, supporting economic growth, and improving family well-being.

Voters want a Child Tax Credit to provide tax relief to working families with children

A recent poll from Public Opinion Strategies found that 87% of likely voters support a Child Tax Credit to provide tax relief for working families, including strong support from Republicans, Democrats, and Independents.¹⁰ This is a widely supported solution that would provide meaningful relief for families across the state.

Please prioritize tax relief for working families in the state budget

We urge you to **prioritize tax relief for families by restoring the refundable Child Tax Credit in the Senate budget.** With your support, we can take a step toward making sure more kids have resources they need to thrive. Together, let's make a historic investment in Ohio's children, working families, and the future of our state.

Thank you for your time and commitment to Ohio families. I am happy to answer any questions.

¹⁰ "The State of Early Childhood in Ohio: 2024 Poll Results and Implications," based on poll findings from Public Opinion Strategies, slide from Groundwork Ohio webinar, January 2025, <https://bit.ly/41xg8IG>

