

From the Desk of: Anissa C. Lumpkin

Ohio House of Representatives
Families, Aging & Human Services Committee
House Bill 145
Anissa Lumpkin
April 15, 2021

Chairman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Committee, my name is Anissa Lumpkin, and I am a Program Manager with the Air Force in Dayton. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 145, which would expand access to publicly funded child care.

In addition to working at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, I also serve on the board of the Dayton-Montgomery County Preschool Promise initiative. I'm proud of our local community's important investment — by both Montgomery County and the City of Dayton — to make early learning and quality child care more affordable and accessible to families. But we can't do this without Ohio's and the federal government's partnership.

Specifically, I ask you to make Ohio's Publicly Funded Child Care program available to more working families who want to be self-sufficient and stay in the workforce. Currently, that program is only available to families earning less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Level. Ohio's eligibility standards put working poor families — mostly women — in an untenable situation. They can't possibly provide for their children and pay for full-time, market-rate child care earning just \$14/hour. The current cut-off to receive PFCC for a working mother with two children is \$13.73/hour. That math doesn't add up.

Gov. DeWine is proposing to raise the PFCC eligibility standard to 138% of the FPL. That is a start, but it is not enough. We need to get to 200% of the FPL in Ohio's next 2-year budget. If we stop at Gov. DeWine's limit, that same mom I just referenced would have to earn less than \$30,304 to get help.

Child care is a necessity for low-income families. They're working in our nursing homes, grocery stores, warehouses, hospitals and in all manner of entry-level positions that are critical to businesses' success. As we've seen during the pandemic, women drop out of the workforce when they can't find or afford childcare. Low-income families are no different than the rest of us — they're not going to put their children in child care that they can't trust.

I also want to speak in support of Ohio's important *Step Up to Quality* initiative. This program incentivizes and rewards child care programs that improve their quality by hiring credentialed teachers, using evidence-based curriculum, helping families teach their children at home and more.

Some lawmakers think *Step Up* should be cut, even eliminated.

That cannot happen. Providers have invested in improving their teaching and programming because they're committed to doing the right thing and getting children ready to start

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kindergarten on track — not behind. If these low-margin businesses aren't compensated for that work, they simply won't have the resources to do what children need.

If we're going to use public dollars to help working poor families with child care costs — and we assuredly should — we need to support quality child care, not babysitting.

I urge you to visit a highly Star-Rated *Step Up to Quality* program in your district and observe what early learning professionals are doing for young children. Before you vote on funding for Ohio's Publicly Funded Child Care program, look into the tremendously hard work that's happening to prepare children for school and promote their early healthy development. I promise that you'll be impressed.

Thank you for your work on behalf of all Ohioans and for considering this testimony.