

Ohio House of Representatives
Families, Aging & Human Services Committee
House Bill 145
Carrie Williamson
4/13/2021

Chairman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the committee, my name is Carrie Williamson and I am “providing testimony today on my own behalf”. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 145, which would expand access to publicly funded child care.

As a former Director of an Early Care and Education center, I have worked with many families applying for Publicly Funded Child Care, (PFCC-Title XX). I have assisted families with application completion, gathering pay stubs and income information, as well as, submission of the necessary paperwork to the county Department of Job and Family Services. After submitting the application, we wait approximately 30 days and often find that the family does not qualify due to a small financial overage of \$20.00-\$40.00 per month. The family may appeal this decision; however, the family cannot place their child in a facility while waiting for the decision. We have also had families assigned weekly copayments of \$55.00 per week while only working 15 hours per week at a low wage. When families in need do not qualify for PFCC or when the copayments are unaffordable, the children cannot attend a safe facility. Families cannot get to work if they do not have safe, affordable center for their children. Additionally, it negatively impacts our ability to enroll families which causes continued financial hardship due to low enrollment.

As it stands now, Ohio’s eligibility rate ranks among the lowest in the country, tying at number 48 with Nevada and Nebraska. This means that a working single mother with two young children can only qualify for publicly funded child care if she is making less than \$28,236 (\$13.57 per hour) annually. Expanding to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) would allow a single mother making less than \$43,400 (\$20.88/hour) annually to have access to affordable, quality child care without spending nearly 40% of her income on child care, which is currently estimated at over \$16,000 per year for two young children who do not qualify for publicly funded child care. It is also worth noting that even with the modest increase provided in the as-introduced version of the state biennial budget (HB 110) to 138% of the FPL, Ohio would only move one ahead of Nevada and Nebraska, as the majority of states currently have an eligibility rate higher than 150% of the FPL.

For all the reasons stated above, I am respectfully urging you to consider expanding initial eligibility for the publicly funded child care subsidy from 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 200% of the FPL as provided in HB 145. The pandemic has made clear now more than ever that if we want to have a thriving economy, we need increased access to quality child care so that parents and caregivers can return to work and stay on the job. Now is the time for us to double down on our commitment to Ohio’s youngest and most vulnerable children, as well as the families who support them. The Ohio General Assembly has the opportunity to keep Ohioans working and businesses operating, help families break out of poverty, and ensure more Ohio children have access to high-quality early learning by expanding access to quality and affordable child care.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today and please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly if you have any questions.