

**Ohio House of Representatives**  
**Families, Aging & Human Services Committee**  
**House Bill 145**  
**Elizabeth Styles**  
**4/13/2021**

Chairman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the committee, my name is Elizabeth Styles and I am a Primary School Principal 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 principal in a primary building that serves preschool aged students, I see firsthand the impact that the cost of childcare has on families. The community that is served by my school district houses families where 76% of them are considered economically disadvantaged. Until recently, this meant that most families were not able to afford preschool for their child. Thankfully, we recently began receiving state grant funding to be able to offset the cost for many families, but it is not enough. We still have many families who fall above the 100% poverty level, but do not earn enough to be able to afford quality child care. This means that they must choose between a quality educational experience for their child and necessary expenses for their family. This is a choice that our community and society cannot afford!

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.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Styles  
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