

**Ohio House of Representatives**  
**Families, Aging & Human Services Committee**  
**House Bill 145**  
**Scarlett Hilton**  
**Hilton Daycare**  
**4/7/2021**

Chairman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the committee, my name is Scarlett Hilton and I am Not o a home childcare provider, operating Hilton Daycare. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 145, which would expand access to publicly funded child care.

If we want families to be able to work, and provide for their children, we must fund childcare. Right now, I am one of seven providers in my county who can take state subsidy payments. However, many families are not able to have two income households, because the second person going to work puts them just above the income limits for childcare and would have to pay a whole paycheck each week towards childcare.

If we want to get families and children out of poverty, we have to make that possible. Not only do we need more high quality, reliable childcare, but it needs to be affordable to families. Doing this is the only way to dig ourselves out of the disastrous economy that Covid-19 has helped create. Childcare was in big trouble before Covid.

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.