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House Families, Aging & Human Services Committee
HB 145
April 15, 2021

Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston and members of the Committee. My name is Gail Long and I am a member of Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality. NOBLE is a coalition of organizations and individuals who bring the voices of low-income individuals and families to the State Biennium Budget process. Most of our members are consumers of numerous services funded in part by the General Revenue Fund and all of us are taxpayers.

NOBLE is here today to support HB 145. In our Biennium Budget Platform, we have for several years supported increasing the eligibility subsidy requirement to 200% of the FPL. This would mean that a working family of four (4) could earn up to \$52,400 a year and be eligible for the childcare subsidy.

I am a retired executive director of a neighborhood center in Cleveland that offered cradle to grave services. Childcare was one of our biggest and most popular programs. We served children from the ages of 6 months to 12 years of age. Parents could leave their children, go to work, and know that their children would be safe, well fed and in a learning environment. I had not retired when the subsidy was lowered from 185% of the FPL. Right away, parents either asked relatives, neighbors, or friends to watch their children so that they could continue to work, or they were forced to leave their low paying jobs because they could no longer afford childcare. These parents wanted to work, and they wanted to be contributing members of society.

Yes, the Governor and the House of Representatives are proposing an increase from 130% to 138% of the FPL. 138% will not support enough families who want to work while sending their children to a quality, affordable childcare center. We urge you to pass HB 145 and support working families and their children. In 2019, the Urban Institute says in their study, "What if We Expanded Child Care Subsidies," that by increasing the subsidy to 150% of the FPL an additional 67,400 children could be served. This number would be larger if HB 145 were passed.

Thank you for allowing us to speak and for your support of HB 145.

Respectfully,
Gail Long