



William W. LeBoeuf, CPFA®
Carillon Advisors, LLC
75 Harbert Dr.
Beavercreek, Ohio 45440

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Ohio Senate
Health Committee
House Bill 110
William LeBoeuf

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the committee, my name is William W. LeBoeuf and I am providing testimony today on my own behalf as a volunteer for the YMCA of Greater Dayton and a non-childcare, business owner in the Dayton area. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony expressing my support for expanding the number of State sponsored childcare support in House Bill 110.

For the body/content:

My testimony today is in support of an increase in the number of families receiving State funding to pay for preschool promise initiatives throughout Ohio. My approach to recommending the State consider utilizing the 150% FPL mark as a target for granting assistance is not one derived from the belief that there is unlimited capacity for government to dole out dollars for all financial afflictions of the citizenry. It come from a person and a place that is quite opposed to the unreasonable and unwarranted Federal stimulus flowing out of Washington, D.C., and I deeply appreciate those that would push back on endless spending.

My testimony is targeted to ask the President and the Committee to consider the good that can be done by teaching the recipient of the State funded childcare dollars the value in being able to choose which school their child attends. The flow of dollars to any childcare center comes from the Federal Government through the State Government, through the parent, through the child and to the childcare provider. That mechanism is the essence of empowering families to choose the best site for their child.

As a 25-year volunteer for the YMCA of Greater Dayton (YMCA) and one that has and still is encouraging our leadership to take a more intentional approach to how we educate children when they are in our care, I have consistently and forcefully insisted that we measure our success qualitatively and quantitatively. Since forming the Early Childcare Education Branch (ECE is a subset of the YMCA) in 2012 we have grown from a \$4 Million business to a \$6.5 Million business serving on average 1,500 children per week between

the age of infant and 7th grade during 2019. And we do not walk away at that point, any 7th or 8th grader in our service territory is granted a free membership to any of our branches just for asking.

But the quantitative approach quickly became a back seat driver to the qualitative metrics we sought to employ. Our Advisory Board is a perfect example, we have a CPA, me, the Chair, and the Executive Staff member oversee and advise on the budget. But on the social, emotional, and qualitative side we have eight Committee Members with backgrounds from the University of Dayton, Wright State, Children's Hospital, 4Cs, DECA, and with legal backgrounds to help us navigate and grow two essential components of any high-quality childcare organization: **consistency and culture**. As we have learned in our efforts, *Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast!*

The ECE Board dived deeply in the Step-Up-To-Quality metrics and the Star rating system. In our strategy sessions held every three years, we made achieving the three-, four- and five-star accreditation a high priority and a matter contributing to the bonus compensation YMCA President. We knew that achieving these high marks within the Star system would mean we were hitting our goals of consistency and culture.

Now, circling back to the why and how I support the expansion of recipients of the State funding for childcare and the continued support of the Star rating system. I believe that given a meaningful Star rating system, that the parent is provided a mechanism to quickly decide where to get their children the best start in life. Rhetorically, if one were going to pick a mutual fund in which to invest, as a nonprofessional you would likely find your way to the Morningstar Rating or Lipper Rating, and confidently select. I propose that the Star system in Ohio can be that for parents receiving funding. A credible and sustained preschool rating system, that is measuring consistency of staff, some measure of outcome, and adherence to reasonable uniform standards is a viable solution to giving the parent the power to effectively choose a childcare site. Milton Friedman studied school subsidies and outcomes in the 1970s and 1980s and determined that above all factors giving a parent the right to choose their school is the most effective tool in determining a good outcome. In his work *Free to Choose - Vol. 06 What's Wrong with Our Schools?*, available on Youtube.com, Friedman outlines how parent choice and parental responsibility in the education of children is the U.S. tradition and is consistent with a free society, and that government interference with this market forces has only negative effects. My co-advocates would argue that there must be enough aid to support the salaries of the teaching community, so that qualified teachers are available at a living wage. I agree that teachers are paid less by comparison to other career choices, but I would argue that the lack of choice has made the role teachers in our public schools more of a commodity due to government influence and has the negative affect of keeping those who would seek to excel under a wet blanket, do not rock the boat, mentality.

Furthermore, there is the opportunity to teach, indoctrinate, or create a culture of expectation among financial aid recipients that choice is good, they have the power to choose, and that they should not accept anything less throughout their child's educational journey.

Regarding the expense, it would be my proposal to adjust the amount received by each parent to be a ratio to the pool of existing funds. I know for a fact that the Federal Government wants to drive dependency through the notion of equity, but while all men are created equal and endowed with unique abilities by their creator, all outcomes will never be equal. If you accept the premise that a fixed budget amount for a fiscal period would simply be divided by the qualified applicants, the benefits of choice and culture would far out way the benefits of dependency, and therefore setting a lower limit relative to the FPL of say, 130%, 138%, or 150% is irrelevant if the goal is getting the best prepared Ohio second grader into the mainstream school system. It is a far better goal to have more parents seeking high quality based on the merit of the childcare provider.

Sincerely,



William W. LeBoeuf
Managing Director, Principal
