



**Testimony in support of Increased Availability of Childcare
in House Bill 110 before the Ohio Senate Finance Committee**
Rachel Winder, Executive Director
Ohio Women's Coalition

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of the proposed amendment to House Bill 110, which would increase the eligibility threshold for publicly funded childcare (Amendment SC2363).

My name is Rachel Winder with Benesch Law and I serve as the Executive Director of the Ohio Women's Coalition.

The Ohio Women's Coalition is a diverse, non-partisan alliance of women in business, women leaders, women business owners, and men that support our mission to amplify the voice of women in Ohio, and to help draw attention to the unique challenges that women encounter, especially women of color and women who live in underserved areas of the state, to gain access to economic opportunities in order to achieve financial stability and prosperity.

Building wealth is integral to women's economic security, good health, and overall well-being. Wealth enables individuals to weather unexpected economic hardships and provides individuals with financial resources that allow them to have proactive control over their lives, giving them the chance to pursue educational degrees, business ventures, or other opportunities without accruing significant debt. Financial stability also means decreased reliance on public assistance and social welfare programs. However, a primary barrier to wealth building for working mothers is access to quality, reliable, affordable childcare. This amendment will make 14,000 additional families eligible for publicly funded childcare, offering increased economic stability and opportunities for wealth building.

Women, especially women of color, continue to face numerous obstacles to wealth accumulation throughout their lifetime. Expanded access to quality early learning will not only help working women of color, but will help to level the playing field for children of color by closing achievement gaps, resulting in improved kindergarten readiness rates, high school graduation, and greater life-time earning potential.

Virtually all of the economic gains experienced by the typical middle-class family since 1970 have been due to increases in women's earnings. From 1970 to 2013, women's increased labor force participation and increased earnings grew the U.S. economy by 13.5 percent, which translates into an additional \$2 trillion in economic activity. Women, and mothers in particular, make up a significant proportion of the labor force, and their employment and wages are vital to the overall health of the labor market and the U.S. economy. However, the pandemic has forced 2.3 million women to leave the workforce, reducing the women's labor force participation rate to the lowest it's been since 1988. Lack of childcare options is cited as a primary reason. As we begin to return

to a sense of normalcy, we must give women who want to return or enter the workforce the tools they need, and this amendment is one step towards achieving that goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for Amendment SC2363. We encourage your favorable consideration in House Bill 110. Further, we encourage you to utilize the OWC as a resource on this and future legislative efforts to promote the advancement of women in Ohio.

Thank you,

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