



**Ohio House of Representatives
House Ways and Means
House Bill 118
Karie Hershberger
Parent ambassador
Community Action of Wayne/Medina Head Start
May 23, 2023**

Chair Roemer, Vice Chair Manning and Ranking Member Troy, and members of the Ways & Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of House Bill 118, co-sponsored by Representatives Miller (R-Ashland) and Santucci (R-Howland Township).

My name is Karie Herberger and after a few years of marriage my husband and I moved to the small town of Rittman, Ohio to begin raising a family. We choose this small town in Wayne County because we wanted a small community to raise our children in, and because it was an affordable place to start a family.

Fifteen years later and we are still here, only now we have a 13-year-old daughter and 10-year-old son. The first few years after my daughter was born, were tough on us in a lot of ways. My husband worked full time for minimum wage, and I worked part time and did odd jobs bringing in what little income I could, to help while raising our daughter.

I was introduced to Head Start because of needing extra support for my daughter who was struggling developmentally, and Head Start quickly became more than just support for my daughter. Head Start became a lifeline to so many things for me as a first-time mom. My daughter had severe allergies and required a special diet that at times became very expensive. Thanks to Head Start I was introduced to WIC and was able to receive needed food which allowed me to afford the food needed for her special diet. As my daughter quickly grew, we found ourselves needing to spend money on larger baby items like car seats and strollers. I am grateful for Head Start and their Car Seat Safety classes they offer that allowed me to acquire a car seat that fit my child. Times were still tough, and when my son was born a few years later, we again found ourselves at Heat Start thankful for the help they offered. I am so grateful for all the support for my family that Head Start provided for us.

I am reaching out to ask you to please support this bill. Times were tough for us as a family 13 years ago with little children, and if I'm being honest, today they are even harder.

The increase in costs for simple food items is a struggle for many us and any break helps. To many people, not paying the tax might not seem like a lot, because it is just a few dollars added to your purchase of diapers, but those few dollars to a struggling single mother or family could be the difference between having milk in the fridge for her growing kids.

For me, buying used was a huge part of how we were able to afford many of the items our kids have needed growing up. But many items for babies like, cribs or car seats can't be sold or donated used due to safety reason. We bought our first crib used and quickly realized that it was not safe for our baby, we ended up borrowing money from family to buy a new crib. Again, I know that it might not seem like much, a few extra dollars added to your purchase, but those few extra dollars to a parent, could be what helps them buy fresh fruit for the first time for their kids.

No child's safety, comfort or health should be what keeps a parent awake at night when it comes to basic needs being met. No parent should have to choose between diapers and formula. No parent should have to be concerned because they purchased an expired car seat from a friend and not know if it will protect their child if ever in an accident.

All parents worry about a lot of things, that will never change, but you can help bring some much-needed relief. Help these young families provide for their children's needs by removing some of the extra cost. I am grateful for Head Start and how they came a long side me and so many other parents and helped remove some of the worry, some of the strain. You have an opportunity to make a difference with the passing of this bill, one that will allow that mother or father, grandmother or aunt raising our future worry a little less.

Thank you,

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