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United Way of Greater Toledo
Serving Lucas, Wood,
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United Way President & CEO Testifies in Columbus

[May 14, 2021, TOLEDO, OH] – United Way of Greater Toledo’s President & Chief Executive Officer, Wendy Pestrue, gave testimony to the Senate Finance Committee yesterday, urging officials to add an amendment to House Bill 110, which would increase eligibility for publicly funded childcare.

“By expanding eligibility for publicly funded childcare from 130 percent to 150 percent of the federal poverty level; we can help alleviate the financial burden of quality childcare for working families. This would specifically support a family of three, making \$32,580 annually, or \$15.66 an hour or less, afford childcare,” said Pestrue.

According to data from United Way’s “Ohio ALICE Report” — ALICE being an acronym for “asset limited, income constrained, employed” — the average four-person household in Lucas, Ottawa and Wood County, having two adults and two children, would need to budget \$1,474 per month, just to afford childcare.

“We also must note that 12,697 families with children in our counties currently live in poverty, while an additional 11,989 families with children are ‘asset limited.’ These are Ohio’s working families. Parents who are struggling to make ends meet, who want to give their children the high-quality care they deserve, but simply cannot afford it.”

Serving as Vice Chair of the Senate Finance Committee is Senator Theresa Gavarone, who represents Ohio District Two, encompassing Erie, Ottawa and Wood County, as well as parts of Fulton and Lucas County. The organization has had numerous conversations with the Senator, including a recent childcare roundtable discussion on the importance of expanding publicly funded childcare.

During her time on the floor, Pestrue stressed the point that childcare is key to a strong state economy. She argued that, increasing eligibility, so families can access childcare, would lead to more kids being ready for kindergarten, which correlates with long-term graduation rates, and helps parents retain employment by having reliable, accessible care.

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