



**Ohio House of Representatives
Committee on Families, Aging & Human Services**

House Bill 145

Wendy Pestrue, J.D., United Way of Greater Toledo

March 31, 2021

Chairman,
Vice Chair,
Ranking Member West and members of the committee,

My name is Wendy Pestrue, president and chief executive officer at United Way of Greater Toledo. I want to sincerely thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 145, which would expand initial childcare eligibility from 130 percent of the federal poverty level, to 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

At United Way, we take great pride in serving the residents of Lucas, Ottawa and Wood County. Being a leading funder of early childcare initiatives in our region, and strong supporter of our childcare providers, I am happy to submit the following testimony, asking that you please support and pass House Bill 145.

As noted above — we urge our Ohio Representatives to expand initial eligibility for publicly funded childcare from 130 percent of the federal poverty level, to 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

This means a family of three, making less than \$43,440 a year can have the opportunity to enroll their children in high-quality care. By expanding eligibility, legislators like yourself will have a direct hand in keeping Ohioans working, helping more families break the cycles of poverty, and ensuring that thousands of children have access to the care they deserve.

To expound upon this further: Quality childcare is a key component to the success of our local and state economy. Having Ohio's youngest learners enrolled in care also means **more kids ready for kindergarten**, which correlates with long-term graduation rates. Increasing accessibility to childcare means that **more families are able to retain employment** and not have to change their working hours. Additionally, it means that childcare centers and care providers can **welcome more kids into their facilities**, sustaining their operations and offering their services to a wider community audience.



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United Way of Greater Toledo
Serving Lucas, Wood,
& Ottawa counties



Here in Lucas County, according to 2018 data from our Ohio ALICE (asset limited, income constrained, employed) report: The average four person household in our community, having two adults and two children, would need to budget \$1,563 per month, just to afford childcare. We also need to take into consideration that 10,573 households in Lucas County, **with children**, currently live in poverty, while an additional 9,737 households, **with children**, are “asset limited.” Meaning that these families are just one financial disaster away from being in poverty.

This story rings true in our rural communities as well, where a four person household in Wood County would need to budget \$1,563 per month, just to afford childcare. While the same demographic household in Ottawa County would need to budget \$1,296 per month, just to afford childcare. Imagine the financial burden we could alleviate for working parents here in our state, if we created more supportive opportunities for childcare.

Our local providers and parents hope you will support this bill, and expand access to the programs and interventions that directly uplift Ohio’s children. We look forward to serving as your ally, if ever you have questions on this particular matter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Wendy Pestrue'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Wendy Pestrue, J.D.
President & Chief Executive Officer



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