Prioritize Investments in Child Care in the State Budget AN OPEN LETTER TO OHIO POLICYMAKERS



Dear Members of the Ohio General Assembly,

For businesses to compete, grow, and succeed—and for Ohio's economy to thrive—we must build a strong workforce foundation and pipeline for continually increasing participation.





The child care crisis facing our state is among the primary challenges in recruiting and retaining reliable and productive workers. Parents' decisions about work are greatly impacted by whether they have access to quality, affordable child care. The harsh reality is, in our state, they all-too-often do not.





As cited by the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, child care costs in Ohio are on average more costly than rent, with the cost ratio among the worst in the nation. There is also limited child care availability, with 60% of rural Ohioans and 30% of all Ohioans living in a "child care desert"—an area with more than 50 children under five and no providers, or an area with three times as many children as licensed child care slots.

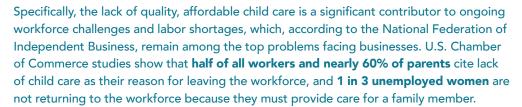




Make no mistake—this is a crisis that is also hamstringing our economy. In fact, the lack of quality child care for children ages three and younger is costing our country **\$122 billion a year** in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue, and Ohio's economy loses an estimated **\$3.9 billion per year** due to child care issues, according to the Council for a Strong America, ReadyNation Report from February 2023.

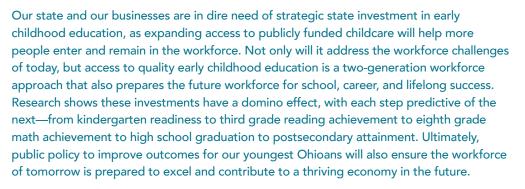




















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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

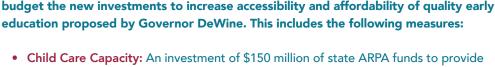
Lima / Allen County

HAMBER

UNION COUNTY

DUNATUS

Every piece is important.



That is why we—business and community leaders from across the state of Ohio—are

strongly urging our state legislature to protect and pass through the upcoming biennial



child care scholarships and to increase infant and toddler child care capacity in communities throughout the state.



• Child Care Eligibility: An expansion of the state's publicly-funded child care program from 142% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to 160%, which would result in more than 15,000 children and families gaining access to care.



 Preschool: An additional \$46 million per year in Early Childhood Education grants, estimated to expand preschool to an additional 11,525 children under 200% FPL.



TOLEDO REGIONAL

YOUNGSTOWN

WARREN REGIONAL CHAMBER

Group

Even with these targeted investments, too many children and their families will still be left out. They are just the beginning of what is needed to fully address the child care crisis facing kids, parents, and Ohio businesses, but they are a vital step in the right direction.





President & CEO Ohio Business Roundtable

Gordon Gough

President & CEO Ohio Council of Retail Merchants

Janetta King

Midwest Director Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Voices

Kelly O'Reilly

Ohio Association of Health Plans

Rick Baxter

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President & CEO Greater Cincinnati | Northern Kentucky African American Chamber of Commerce

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Lima/Allen County Chamber of Commerce

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Coastal products

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