

My name is Michael Batchelder and I am an attorney for Ohio Council 8, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, the union which represents approximately 2,000 type A and B family childcare providers in the state of Ohio. With me today is Asyia Haile, owner of Asa Tots Day Care and a Licensed type B family child care provider in Franklin County. Asyia is also 2 star rated in Ohio's Step Up to Quality program and President of Local 4025 of Ohio Council 8 which represents over 400 providers in and around Central Ohio. We are here today to ask the Senate to support quality early childhood education by restoring collective bargaining rights for family child care providers.

Family child care providers like Asyia, who provide child care in their homes, fill an irreplaceable niche in the state's early childhood care system. There are approximately 3,000 licensed family child care providers across Ohio providing care for children. Without these providers many communities and families would be left without affordable child care options. And if these families do not have subsidized child care options they cannot work or attend school. I say all of this to emphasize the importance of ensuring that family child care providers have adequate support to provide services to families eligible for subsidized childcare.

Our Union provides such critical support and services for our member child care providers which not only assist them in improving their businesses and care for children but also assists counties and the state in furthering the goals of improving the subsidized child care program in Ohio. For example, our contract provides us with representation on both the Child Care Advisory Council, which advises Jobs and Family Services and the Early Childhood Advisory Council, which advises the Governor's office. As representatives on the Councils both

our professional staff and members advocate for family child care providers when state policy changes are considered. From the state's perspective our members and staff provide critical feedback regarding how any proposed policy changes will affect providers on the ground. Once decisions are made our staff and member leaders provide a crucial role in communicating those changes to our membership. This could mean explaining a change in rule or encouraging providers to participate in Step Up to Quality. Our Union can also serve a critical role when contentious issues arise, such as when the state instituted its swipe card system for reimbursement.

Most importantly, the Union's work in helping to support family child care providers have far reaching impacts for the families and children served by the subsidized child care program. The Union encourages and provides opportunities for professional development which increase the quality of care provided to children in Ohio. Also, the enhanced pride and respect that comes with having a voice in how their business operates means children and their families receive better care for their children.

Our Union does all of this work on behalf of our members at no additional cost to the state. We do not bargain over wages or health insurance. The only cost is that providers who care for Ohio's children have basic rights and a voice in decisions that affect their businesses and the children they care for. The Governor and this legislature often pronounce their support for enhanced early childhood education. Yet the actions of the Governor to strip collective bargaining rights from family child care providers sends the opposite message. I implore this

legislature to support quality early childhood education and restore collective bargaining rights for family child care providers.