

# Ohio House committee moves bill sharing child care costs among parents, employers and the state

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COLUMBUS, Ohio - An amended plan to share the cost of child care among parents, their employers and the state advanced Tuesday out of an Ohio House committee.

Members of the Ohio House Children and Human Services Committee voted out a substitute version of House Bill 2, which would [fund](#) the “Child Care Cred” program with \$10 million to be handled by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth. The state would kick in a percentage of child care costs for eligible families, which would cover a portion of their child care along with their employers.

A similar program called “[Tri-Care](#)” has been instituted in neighboring Michigan. The bill could be on the House floor as soon as Wednesday if it’s taken up by the Rules and References Committee.

Child care has become [a front-burner issue for powerful business interests in Ohio](#). The Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the Ohio Business Roundtable have pushed state lawmakers to address problems with both the cost and availability of child care, [saying it hurts recruitment of employers for Ohio businesses](#).

The state budget bill Ohio House lawmakers passed last month [provides \\$213 million in new money for child care programs](#), including partially funding a child care grant program favored by Gov. Mike DeWine and the tri-share program outlined in HB 2. The Ohio Senate has begun hearings on the budget but has not yet put forth its own changes yet.

State Rep. Jodi Salvo, a Bolivar Republican and vice chair of the committee, moved to amend HB 2 to align the bill with language in the House budget. That change divides the cost responsibilities three ways — with the employer and employee both responsible for 40%, and the state covering 20%. Previously, the bill called for equal sharing among the three.

A similar but not identical [companion bill](#), Senate Bill 32, is working through the state Senate.

Participating employers choose which employees can take advantage of the program, [according to a legislative analysis](#), though it's unclear how they would be chosen.

The substitute bill also prohibits the Department of Children and Youth from requiring providers to participate in the Step Up to Quality program to be eligible. The [program](#) is a quality rating and improvement system for Ohio's early childcare and education programs. It also recognizes and promotes programs that meet and exceed quality standards with the hope of improving child outcomes.

State Rep. Tracy Richardson, a Marysville Republican, supported the vote on HB 2 but said she hopes the finance committee will reduce overall funding for the program.

"I believe that this is great intent to get skin in the game where we have individual public-private partnerships trying to solve a very big challenge -- which is access to childcare, and availability of childcare and funding of childcare," Richardson said.

"I will support the bill, but I want to publicly state that I believe that our finance committee may have some work to do on this bill, maybe look at perhaps at some reduction in overall funding," she continued.

State Rep. Sarah Fowler Arthur, a Ashtabula Republican, was the only vote against the bill.

Committee members also approved House Bill 41, which would require the Ohio Department of Children and Youth to [establish a grant program](#) to "expand child care capacity, support the state's workforce and aid in business growth and recruitment."

Both Fowler Arthur and state Rep. Gary Click, a Vickery Republican, objected to the vote. Similar to her comments on HB 2, Richardson supported the measure but wants the finance committee to take a closer look at appropriation.

The bill would spend \$10 million a year over the next two years for grants totaling as much as \$750,000.