



Talking Points for Conference Committee: Reaction to Governor's Proposed Budget Framework Released 6/19/09 for the Conference Committee

FOR YOUR USE ONLY: DO NOT PASS OUT TO LEGISLATORS

General Points

- I am calling on behalf of (your organization here).
- The cuts outlined in the Governor's proposed budget framework for the conference committee would have a significant negative impact on the children most at-risk for school failure and the parents in Ohio most vulnerable to dropping out of the workforce.
- Ohio's early childhood system has already been cut by \$267 million in the House and Senate budgets- more than our fair share!
- During difficult economic times, it is even more important to focus resources on services that help our families hang on, support our current workforce and build the workforce of tomorrow.
- Ohio's budget cannot be balanced mostly by cuts. We need to increase state revenues, from reliable revenue streams, to provide necessary funding for such critical areas as health, education, safety and social services.

Child Care

Governor's Framework Proposals: Access to subsidized child care is reduced from 200 percent of FPL to 150 percent of FPL, with current enrollees between 150 and 200 percent maintained in the program. Child care provider rates are reduced by 5 percent (of the 2006 Market Rate). Definition of full-time care at 35 hours as proposed in the Executive budget.

- Reducing eligibility to 150% of FPL (\$33,075 for a family of 4) greatly reduces the opportunity for working families to access safe, reliable child care and remain in the workforce.
- Between the reduction of the reimbursement rate and the increase in hours defining full time, providers will be extremely challenged to maintain their staffing levels and provide quality services.

ELI and Public Preschool (Early Childhood Education)

Governor's Framework Proposals: Eliminate ELI and transfer current participants to subsidized child care over a 2 month period. Fund Public Preschool at the level as passed by the House, a reduction of \$23 million dollars and a cut of approximately 1/3 of the slots.

- ELI and Public Preschool are the two comprehensive early education programs for low income children. They not only provide a high-quality early education experience, but they also ensure children are physically healthy and socially and emotionally ready for kindergarten.
- Giving children the basic social, emotional, and academic tools, as well as the health treatment they need to be better students, improves our schools and communities and reduces the need for costly interventions later in the K-12 system.
- An analysis of the Fall 2008 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment – Literacy (KRA-L) scores shows that 72 percent of the districts that started a Public Preschool program in the 2007-2008 school year saw an increase in the districts KRA-L scores the following year when those children entered kindergarten.

- On Friday, the Governor said “we must continue to prioritize education for economic growth. The jobs of the future will go where world-class schools produce highly-trained, highly-skilled workers. Postponing education reform will only hold Ohio back.” Research shows us that a lack of investment in high-quality early care and education makes our investment in the K-12 and higher education systems less effective and efficient; we know that quality early care and education is one of the most important investments we can make in the workforce of tomorrow.
- Through many long-term research studies children who had high-quality early education experiences have been shown to need less special education and grade retention, have higher standardized test scores from preschool through high-school, and have median incomes as adults much greater than their peers who did not participate in high-quality early care and education.

Help Me Grow

Governor’s Framework Proposals: Fund Help Me Grow at the ORIGINAL Executive Budget Level of \$36.5 million per year in General Revenue Funds.

- Help Me Grow ensures that we are reaching Ohio’s most vulnerable children and families when intervention is the most effective- during a child's first three years.
- There is no other comprehensive family outreach for infants and toddlers in our communities- without Help Me Grow, many of these children will fall through the cracks.
- Help Me Grow helps prevent child abuse and neglect, which unfortunately is on the rise as many parents struggle to make ends meet in a difficult economy.
- The Senate’s proposal to use \$21.5 million per year from TANF for Help Me Grow is not a viable solution. The TANF budget is already completely obligated to other priorities. We do not support cutting other essential parts of our safety net to fund Help Me Grow.
- Reducing our General Revenue Funds in Help Me Grow to \$14.9 million per year will also greatly limit Ohio's ability to draw down federal Medicaid funding for home visitation.

Tips for making phone calls:

- Clearly state your name and where you live.
- Be prepared to make your point in several sentences.
- Ask for a response that includes the elected official's position.
- Realize that the staff member answering phones may have been instructed not to make detailed comments about the issues; this is done in letters so that elected official's position is not misrepresented.
- Follow up with an e-advocacy letter, if possible:
<http://www.groundworkohio.org/getinvolved/contactrep.cfm>

Please call ALL three people on the list below- it does not matter if they do not directly represent you! Remember; ask you staff and parents to make calls! Ask you churches and your board, and anyone else who cares about young children!!

Governor’s Office: Janetta King, Policy Director, 614-466-3555

Senate President, Senator Bill Harris: 614-466-8086

Speaker of the House, Representative Armond Budish: 614-466-5441

Please email DAVID HOWARD at dhoward@groundworkohio.org to let us know how many calls you have made so we can track our coverage. Thank you!