

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

3/31/2009

Leetina S. Graham

GroundWork Campaign

My name is Leetina S. Graham. I am a resident of Franklin County, in Columbus, Ohio. I am a single mother and work for Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency, for the past 9 years, as a full-time employee; also, I am a full-time student at Columbus, State Community College. I have one child enrolled at Columbus Early Learning Centers-East, and her name is Arianna B. Smith, whom is 4 years of age. I am currently involved in the ***EARLY LEARNING INITIATIVE (ELI)*** Program, and I am receiving help from this state program due to my income qualifications.

If my family were no longer able to receive funding for child care, it will be a very stressful time for me. Child Care costs are rising along with everything else in our economy. Not only am I paying Rent, Utilities, Health Insurance, Car Insurance, Groceries, Gas, and Fee's for College. If child care were added into that, I will have to stop paying Health Insurance and Car Insurance and will have to put off finishing school to get a second job just to make ends meet. I am one of those parents that do not qualify for food assistance or medical assistances from the Job and Family Services as; they report that my family income is over the income qualifications. Not only will it be financial stress, I will have to then worry about sending her to a cheaper child care, and worry about her safety all day.

The child care my daughter is enrolled at now, I am very comfortable with. She is in a head start class room, which starts to prepare her of kindergarten. My daughter loves her daycare and so do I. I myself attended the same child care when I was her age; of course there are different staff now. I am very confident she will be taken care of, and safe at all times. On a daily basic, my daughter is learning her numbers, color, shapes, Spelling her name, and getting along with other children. She looks forward for Tuesday and Fridays. Tuesdays her class room takes a trip to the library, and every Friday is "share your favorite book day".

So Chairman Sykes and Representatives, please take my story into consideration in knowing that maintaining the eligibility for child care assistance helps out thousands of families that are in need.

Thank You