

Good morning, everyone,

On behalf of YWCA Hanover, I want to extend a warm welcome to all of you. We are honored to host today's House Republican Policy Committee hearing on making child care more affordable and accessible for families across Pennsylvania.

I'd especially like to thank Representative Kate Klunk and the members of the committee for being here and for your leadership on this important issue.

At YWCA Hanover, we see every day how essential childcare is—not just for children's development, but for working parents, employers, and the strength of our local economy.

And the challenges are very real—both here in York County and across the Commonwealth.

Since 2020, **more than 20% of childcare providers in York County have closed**, leaving fewer options for families and long waitlists for those seeking care. In fact, many early learning programs report **waitlists of 50 to 75 children**, reflecting just how limited availability has become.

Across Pennsylvania, the picture is just as concerning. The average cost of infant care is around **\$13,000 per year**, often consuming **30 to 50 percent of a family's income**—far above what is considered affordable. And due to workforce shortages, there are currently **about 3,000 unfilled childcare positions statewide**, meaning thousands of children cannot access care even when families are ready to pay for it.

We also know this is not just a family issue—it's an economic one. In Pennsylvania, **81% of employers report challenges recruiting and retaining workers due to child care issues**.

These numbers reflect what we see every day at YWCA Hanover: families making impossible choices, educators stretched thin, and employers struggling to build a reliable workforce.

And yet, we also see the opportunity.

When we invest in childcare, we invest in children's futures, in working families, and in the economic vitality of communities like ours.

That's why today's hearing is so important.

We are proud to be part of the solution—providing early childhood education and support for families—and we are grateful for the opportunity to share our experiences and learn from others.

We hope today's conversation leads to thoughtful, practical solutions that expand access, support the workforce, and make childcare more affordable for all Pennsylvania families.

Thank you again for being here, for your partnership, and for your commitment to this critical issue.

Welcome to YWCA Hanover—we look forward to a meaningful and productive discussion