



June 15, 2020

Governor Mike DeWine  
77 S. High Street, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
[Governorsoffice@governor.ohio.gov](mailto:Governorsoffice@governor.ohio.gov)

Via Email

RE: Clarify “suitable work” and “good cause” as applied in Ohio’s Unemployment Compensation Program

Dear Gov. DeWine:

We write to urge you to order the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to provide a good cause exemption to unemployment compensation recipients who refuse to return to work due to lack of affordable and available childcare.

Unemployment compensation helps Ohioans make it through periods of financial insecurity. Tens of thousands of Ohioans have been laid off as a result of the pandemic and recession. According to Household Pulse Survey data collected between April 28 and May 24, 2021, roughly one in four adults in Ohio have difficulty covering usual household expenses.<sup>1</sup> Unemployment compensation helps Ohio adults cover the basics and maintains purchasing power, stabilizing local economies.

Due to COVID-19, many families have been forced to choose between leaving their children at home unsupervised or quitting their jobs to take care of their children. Neither are ideal options and will ultimately harm children. According to the Household Pulse Survey, in the last half of April 2021, 6.7 million individuals across the country said they were caring for children not in school or daycare.<sup>2</sup> Parents and caregivers who do not have childcare services, who have school-aged children who are not able to attend school in person every day, or do not have care for the summer months cannot return to work. These individuals should not be disqualified from receiving UC benefits.

Caregivers, particularly women, are unable to return to work without affordable, accessible childcare for their children. Since the beginning of the pandemic, over 2.3 million women have left the U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/tracking-the-covid-19-recessions-effects-on-food-housing-and>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.politifact.com/article/2021/may/17/no-it-isnt-clear-unemployment-checks-are-main-reas/>

workforce, in part due to lack of childcare options.<sup>3</sup> Even before COVID, many mothers struggled to find childcare that aligned with their work schedules.<sup>4</sup>

The pandemic has shown how a lack of reliable, affordable childcare can knock parents out of the workforce and send shock waves through the entire economy. Like many businesses, childcare providers have closed or reduced their capacity to serve children due to the pandemic. According to data from the Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD), the number of childcare programs serving children and families in 31 Appalachian counties is down 17% since February 2020.<sup>5</sup> This means thousands of parents and caregivers still don't have any affordable childcare options available.

Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 4141.29(D)(2)(b) disqualifies an individual from unemployment compensation who refuses without good cause to accept an offer of suitable work, and ORC 4141.29(F) contains factors to consider in determining whether work is suitable, including that the director "shall consider the degree of risk to the claimant's health, safety, and morals, the individual's physical fitness for the work, the individual's prior training and experience..."

Recommendation: Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services shall consider whether the individual has available and affordable childcare services when determining suitable work.

Because the lack of childcare is a barrier to returning to work, expanding childcare access must be a priority in Ohio's economic recovery. And until childcare is available, individuals should not lose their unemployment compensation benefits. ODJFS must provide lack of childcare as a good cause exemption to unemployment compensation recipients who refuse to return to work due to lack of affordable and available childcare.

Most Sincerely,

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CC via email:

Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted

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Dan Tierney, Press Secretary, Office of Ohio Governor Mike DeWine [dan.tierney@governor.ohio.gov](mailto:dan.tierney@governor.ohio.gov)

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<sup>3</sup> [https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Final\\_NWLC\\_Press\\_CovidStats.pdf](https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Final_NWLC_Press_CovidStats.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99148/insights\\_on\\_access\\_to\\_quality\\_child\\_care\\_for\\_families\\_with\\_nontraditional\\_work\\_schedules\\_0.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/99148/insights_on_access_to_quality_child_care_for_families_with_nontraditional_work_schedules_0.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Email from George Goddard, Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development