COLUMBUS, OH—Philanthropy Ohio’s Chief Communications and Public Policy Officer, Claudia Y.W. Herrold, has issued the following statement in response to House Bill 110, the state’s two-year main operating budget.

We thank the Ohio Senate for its leadership on the state’s operating budget, signaling the Senate’s willingness to make significant investments in Ohio’s future as we recover from the pandemic and its devastating impacts. While we applaud many of the provisions laid out this week, we express a few concerns as the bill heads to the Senate floor, asking for reinstatement of the Step Up To Quality program. Eliminating Step Up to Quality is a step backwards in investing in the health and wellness of our children and families. The evidence-based approach of this program has allowed families across the state access to childcare providers and professionals who have prepared them for healthier lives. We encourage the Senate to put the child back into childcare by restoring the language regarding to Step Up to Quality and continuing to invest in Ohio’s children.

We are pleased to see the Ohio Senate restore the $650 million to Student Wellness and Success Funding over the biennium, as proposed by the Governor, to provide Ohio’s student’s the much needed wrap-around services to help them succeed in their educational paths, paths that have been disrupted by the pandemic and services that will be much needed as our students return full-time to in person learning. These funds are a strong investment in their future success and health and also in the future of Ohio. We appreciate very much the twelve percent increase from 130% - 142% of the FPL for childcare eligibility, that will allow more underserved communities access to that care and help our youngest Ohioans get ready for K-12 schooling.

We also applaud the Senate’s version fixing Ohio’s school funding problems, with its proactive approach ensuring that districts have equitable, predictable, adequate resources with which to educate all Ohio students.

We are disappointed that the Senate chose to follow the House’s action to remove FAFSA completion as a graduation requirement. $87 million in federal aid are left on the table because not all eligible students complete the federal aid form, aid that can make post-secondary education more affordable and attainable. We ask that, short of requiring such completion (with an easy exemption) for graduation, that the General Assembly consider other ways to incentivize schools and families to complete the form.