

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 4, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairman
Senate Health, Education, Labor
& Pensions Committee
428 Senate Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott
Chairman
House Committee on Education & Labor
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Senate Health, Education, Labor
& Pensions Committee
428 Senate Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Ranking Member
House Committee on Education & Labor
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Ranking Member Burr, Chair Scott, and Ranking Member Foxx:

We write to express our support for the *Child Care Workforce and Facilities Act* and to encourage you to advance this important bipartisan legislation that would invest in upgrading child care facilities and building new supply in high-need areas.

As you know, the shortage of accessible, affordable child care was both a major challenge for American families and a strain on our national economy even before the coronavirus pandemic. According to a 2018 report, over half of Americans live in child care deserts—areas with either no child care centers or more than three times as many children under the age of five as there are spaces in centers. The pandemic has only exacerbated this challenge, with recent studies estimating that over 80 percent of child care centers are enrolling fewer children today than they did pre-pandemic.

One critical component of improving access to child care is developing and establishing a well-paid, effective early childhood workforce. Unfortunately, due to a lack of investment in these workers—who are disproportionately women and minorities—the median child care worker earned just over \$12 per hour in 2020, while more than half of U.S. child care workers participate in a public assistance program.

Access to child care can be a significant barrier for families as they return to work. As the White House Covid-19 Response Team continues their mission to vaccinate Americans, and workers return to physical workplaces, we must ensure that workers across the country have access to affordable child care. Doing so will be especially crucial in underserved areas and low- and

middle-income communities since child care shortages were more prevalent among these populations before the pandemic and have only intensified over the past year.

To address the nationwide child care shortage and underinvestment in child care workers, we introduced the bipartisan *Child Care Workforce and Facilities Act*. Our legislation provides \$100 million per year to create a new competitive grant program to help states support the education, training, or retention of the child care workforce, as well as the building, renovating, or expanding of child care facilities in areas with child care shortages. Additionally, the bill requires applicants to demonstrate how their projects will increase the availability and affordability of quality child care and help workers obtain skills and certifications to increase career mobility and opportunities for advancement.

We believe that advancing the *Child Care Workforce and Facilities Act* will help ensure that all areas of the country—including rural and underserved communities—can establish an accessible and affordable supply of child care and help people return to work. We respectfully request that this legislation be included as part of the effort to build a supply of infant and toddler care in high-need areas, and look forward to working with you to address these important issues.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Josh Harder
United States Representative



Jaime Herrera Beutler
United States Representative