

CONGRESSMAN COLLIN C. PETERSON

Minnesota - 7th District

<http://collinpeterhouse.gov>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 8, 2019 CONTACT: Tom Mattocks (202) 738-8520

Peterson, Herrera Beutler introduce bipartisan legislation to address shortage of affordable, quality child care

WASHINGTON-Representatives Collin C. Peterson (D-MN) and Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA) introduced the bipartisan *Child Care Workforce and Facilities Act* to address the shortage of quality, affordable child care in rural communities. In the senate, a companion bill was introduced by Senators Klobuchar (D-MN) and Sullivan (R-AK).

The *Child Care Workforce and Facilities Act* would

- Help to address the shortage of affordable child care and qualified child care professionals in Minnesota, particularly Greater Minnesota;
- Provide competitive grants to states to support (1) the education, training, or retention of the child care workforce or (2) building, renovating, or expanding child care facilities in areas with child care shortages; and
- Require applicants to address how their projects would:
 - Increase the availability and affordability of quality child care, including during nontraditional hours.
 - Help workers obtain portable, stackable credentials to foster increased mobility and opportunities for advancement in child care careers.
 - Enhance retention or compensation of quality child care professionals.

“The lack of access to affordable, quality child care in rural America hurts not only families but also employers. Our rural communities face many challenges and this bipartisan bill takes steps to ensure that these communities have the same access to child care as the folks living in urban areas,” Peterson said.

“As the demand for child care continues to increase across Southwest Washington, the number of quality care providers has dwindled, setting up a crisis for working families who are struggling to find and afford care for their kids. I’m pleased we’re taking a step in Congress with this bipartisan legislation to support working parents by helping increase availability and affordability of child care,” Herrera Beutler said.

“Affordable, quality child care must be available to every family. Child care shortages across the country pose a moral and financial issue for communities when parents are forced to decide

between working and staying at home with their children,” Klobuchar said. “Our bipartisan Child Care Workforce and Facilities Act will help ensure that every family has good options available to them when planning for their careers and their children.”

“Access to quality, affordable child care is key to a thriving economy,” Sullivan said. “I hear repeatedly from working Alaska parents that the lack of affordable childcare is among their top concerns, and those concerns are overwhelmingly confirmed by the data. Unfortunately, this problem disproportionately impacts mothers striving to re-enter the workforce. This legislation, which I have introduced with Senator Klobuchar, will help by offering grants focused on states hardest hit like ours to enhance workforce development among child care professionals, and improve facilities that serve families in child care deserts, particularly in our rural communities.”

This bill has strong support from Minnesotan and national child care organizations:

"With more than half our nation's families living in a child care desert, we are facing a child care supply issue and the demand is too high and too costly to ignore. As a leading champion for young children, SCAN applauds Senators Klobuchar and Sullivan and Representatives Peterson and Herrera Beutler for their leadership on this issue. This legislation will ensure that more parents can enter or remain in the workforce while knowing their children are enrolled in the type of quality child care that lays a strong foundation for their future success," said Mark Chriver, CEO of Save the Children Action Network (SCAN).

“The zip code where a family lives should never limit their ability to access high-quality child care. This bipartisan legislation will make a real difference in the lives of working families living in child care deserts. Additionally, it will help stimulate meaningful economic development in communities across the country through increased career opportunities for early educators. Thank you to Senators Klobuchar and Sullivan and Representatives Peterson and Herrera Beutler for your insightful leadership,” said Sarah Rittling, Executive Director of First Five Years Fund.

"Access to child care is a crucial support for low-income families. Parents cannot work unless they have a safe and enriching place for their children to be while they are at their jobs. This legislation will help address the shortage of child care throughout Minnesota, particularly in greater Minnesota, and will help address a crucial barrier to employment. I am grateful for Senator Klobuchar and Congressman Peterson for their leadership in helping find solutions to this problem," said Minnesota Department of Human Services Commissioner Tony Lourey.

