

August 24, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Russell Senate Office Building
Room 317
Washington, DC 20510-1702

Dear Majority Leader McConnell,

As national organizations, we write to urge that any future Senate COVID-19 recovery package, “skinny” or otherwise, include significant dedicated funding for the stabilization of the child care industry. To date, both chambers of Congress have acknowledged the pivotal role child care plays in the rehabilitation of our nation’s economy and the dire need to support the industry. As you know, this support is included in the Senate Health, Economic Assistance, Liability Protections, and Schools (HEALS) Act, which appropriated \$15 billion in emergency funding to aid child care programs and support working parents. While we appreciate your efforts to date, we are deeply concerned about reports suggesting child care assistance has been eliminated from the most recent Senate recovery package, despite the well-documented, desperate needs of the industry and broad bipartisan and bicameral prioritization of child care funding in the next package. Therefore, we call on Congress to continue the strong bipartisan support for the critical role child care plays in our nation’s economic recovery by building upon the \$15 billion investment included in the Senate HEALS Act and prioritizing significant additional funding to help stabilize the child care industry in this emergency funding package.

Child care providers across the country have dealt with months of closures and loss of revenue and face an uncertain future. In fact, a recent survey from the National Association for the Education of Young Children shows 40% of child care providers are certain they will close without financial assistance. Ensuring the child care market weathers this crisis is of public interest and public concern – without child care, the American people cannot go back to work. A Chamber of Commerce Foundation survey found that approximately one in five working parents are unsure if they will be able to return to their pre-pandemic work situation because of the lack of child care, which has significant financial implications for families, our businesses, and our economy. Employers of every size and sector across the country are concerned that child care will impact their employees’ ability to return to work. As the Chamber of Commerce recently stated, “[w]ithout this industry’s survival and ability to safely care for the children of working parents, every other American industry will struggle to return to work.”

It is critical to include significant funding for the stabilization of the child care industry in any forthcoming COVID-19 relief legislation. Without its inclusion, every other attempt to secure our economic recovery will fall short. We appreciate the broad recognition of this need as

demonstrated by you and your colleagues in the HEALS Act, as well as in a number of other proposals such as the Back to Work Child Care Grants Act of 2020, introduced by Senators Joni Ernst (R-IA) and Lamar Alexander (R-TN), along with support from Senators John Boozman (R-AR), Richard Burr (R-NC), Susan Collins (R-ME), John Cornyn (R-TX), Steve Daines (R-MT), Cory Gardner (R-CO), Martha McSally (R-AZ), Thom Tillis (R-NC), and Todd Young (R-IN). Senators Loeffler and Ernst introduced S. Res. 594, calling for an investment of \$25 billion to ensure child care providers can remain open and operating to serve the families that depend on them.

It is without reason that child care would be excluded from any current or future recovery proposals, particularly given the strong support from your caucus. Therefore, we again call on you to address this undeniable and overwhelming need by providing support to give the child care industry, working parents, and our nation's businesses some certainty amidst the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Bank Street College of Education

Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC)

Child Care Aware of America (CCAoA)

Council for a Strong America (CSA)

Early Care and Education Consortium (ECEC)

Educare Learning Network (ELN)

First Five Years Fund (FFYF)

First Focus Campaign for Children

Jumpstart

KinderCare Learning Centers

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Save the Children Action Network (SCAN)

The Committee for Economic Development (CED)

The Ounce of Prevention Fund (The Ounce)

U.S. Chamber of Commerce