

August 6, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United State House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer:

On July 29, the House of Representatives took a historic vote on the H.R. 7027, *the Child Care is Essential Act*, and H.R. 7327, *the Child Care for Economic Recovery Act*. The bills provide \$50 billion in critical financial assistance necessary to stabilize the child care sector and ensure child care providers are able to stay viable and care for our nation's young children during this pandemic. They also provide parents and employers the needed certainty that safe, affordable child care will continue to be available if they return to work. Both bills passed with bipartisan support, highlighting that support for early education and our nation's youngest members remains a bipartisan priority.

While the bipartisan passage of these two bills is a critical first step to ensuring that child care providers and families receive the support they need to survive the pandemic, **we must prioritize the inclusion of child care in the next COVID-19 stimulus package.**

To that end, on Monday, July 27, Senate Republican leaders released the *HEALS Act*, which includes a \$15 billion in investment in child care. While this is a good starting point for negotiations, child care providers have been hit hard by the COVID-19 economic crisis. Even the most conservative estimates suggest that a \$15 billion investment is insufficient. Taking into account higher operational costs due to the pandemic, the closing and reopening of childcare centers due to spikes in COVID-19, and the growing need for school-aged care, the industry needs significantly more to ensure the nation's existing child care slots are not permanently lost.

The child care industry has been decimated by the pandemic. A recent nationwide survey of parents found that 61% of parents had their child care center close at least temporarily due to COVID-19. Of programs that remained open, 85% reported they were operating at less than 50% of their enrollment capacity and 65% of those were operating at less than 25% of capacity. Many programs have had to furlough teachers, and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that a third of child care workers, more than 300,000 individuals, lost their jobs in March alone. Some larger providers have seen an 85% to 90% decline in enrollment. Even as many states reopen their economies, child care enrollment has experienced significant declines due to various COVID-19-related factors. Child care centers nationwide are still only operating at 47% of their

full capacity. The recent rise in cases—along with concerns over a second wave in the fall—will extend the impact on the child care industry, thereby rendering federal action all the more urgent.

Child care remains the backbone of our nation’s economy, serving over 11 million families across a broad socioeconomic spectrum. These families rely on a safe, nurturing environment for their children as caregivers work. If safe, licensed child care providers do not receive the resources they need to operate for America’s families, they will be forced to close their doors permanently, leaving working parents stranded in the middle of a pandemic. Desperate parents who must return to work may be forced to seek alternative arrangements, which are unsafe for families.

Any efforts to stimulate America’s economic recovery and return parents to work will fail if any portion of the child care industry collapses. A recent survey of 2,557 working parents from May 10 to June 22 finds 13% of working parents had to quit a job or reduce hours due to lack of child care. Parents lost a full day of work on average to address their kids’ needs.

A [recent poll](#) commissioned by the First Five Years Fund and Center for American Progress shows overwhelming bipartisan demand among voters across the country for Congress to prioritize emergency relief funding for child care providers in the next COVID-19 recovery package, including 74% of those who voted for President Trump, 83% of voters 65 and older, 86% of suburban women, 97% of Black voters, and 93% of Latinx voters. American families, regardless of party affiliation, have recognized child care as an issue that must be adequately addressed in the next COVID-19 relief package.

Congress has the opportunity to provide working families with the resources they need to return to work, knowing that their youngest children are in a safe and nurturing environment. A failure to provide adequate funding in the next package could result in a collapse of the industry later this year, leaving families with no recourse in the fall.

Therefore, we call on Congress to maintain strong bipartisan support for the critical role the child care industry plays in our nation’s economic recovery. As negotiations continue around the next relief package, we call on leadership to build upon the recent bipartisan passage of \$50 billion included in the Child Care is Essential to prioritize significant additional funding for child care in a final emergency funding package.

Sincerely,



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress

Cindy Axne
Member of Congress

Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress

Susan Wild
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Max Rose
Member of Congress

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

TJ Cox
Member of Congress

Andy Kim
Member of Congress

Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress

Abby Finkenauer
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Angie Craig
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Sharice L. Davids
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Josh Gottheimer
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Abigail Spanberger
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Joe Cunningham
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Jason Crow
Member of Congress