

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1443

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that all young children and families should have access to high-quality, affordable child care and early education.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 12, 2024

Ms. BONAMICI (for herself, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. ADAMS, Mrs. MCBATH, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. POCAN, Ms. PORTER, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia, Ms. TITUS, and Ms. NORTON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that all young children and families should have access to high-quality, affordable child care and early education.

Whereas today's working parents depend on high-quality child care so they can work and support their families;

Whereas, approximately 15,700,000 children under the age of 5 are in a regular child care arrangement;

Whereas the Council For A Strong America reported that the United States lost \$122,000,000,000 in unrealized earnings, productivity, and revenue because of the child care crisis;

Whereas the Department of Health and Human Services recommends that no more than 7 percent of household income shall go toward child care payments; however, middle-income families spend as much as 14 percent on child care and low-income families spend approximately 35 percent of their income on child care;

Whereas child care is difficult to find for millions of families, when only 8 percent of child care centers can provide evening, overnight, or weekend care, and approximately 58 percent of low-income children younger than 6 years old whose parents work nontraditional hours;

Whereas the need for care can dramatically exceed the supply in areas designated as child care deserts;

Whereas more than 50 percent of families in the United States live in child care deserts, including every county in Oregon which is a child care desert for infant and toddler care;

Whereas, in 2023, the national average price of child care was \$11,582;

Whereas the average annual price of child care for 2 children nationwide exceeds mortgage payments by up to 64 percent and rent payments by over 100 percent;

Whereas families of color face income gaps that make high-quality child care even less affordable for the parents and guardians of Black, Indigenous, and other children of color;

Whereas high-quality child care and early education, especially for disadvantaged children, such as Head Start and Early Head Start, help children thrive in school and beyond;

Whereas, in 2023, the National Head Start Association reported 65 percent of providers claimed Head Start and Early Head Start vacancies remain high, and 76 percent of classroom closure are due to staff vacancies;

Whereas high-quality child care improves children's early learning, cognitive and language development, and social and emotional development during the earliest years of foundational brain development;

Whereas the eligibility requirements to receive assistance under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, the primary source of Federal funding support, exclude most children in the United States from Federal child care assistance;

Whereas the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 serves only a fraction of families, with just 1 in 9 eligible children under age 6 receiving Federal child care assistance;

Whereas these issues affect all families, but disproportionately affect women, many of whom are unable to enter the workforce due to the lack of affordable, high-quality child care for their children;

Whereas the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the average hourly wage of child care workers is \$14.60;

Whereas the vast majority of the child care workforce is comprised of women, overwhelmingly women of color;

Whereas Black child care providers earn an average of 78 cents less per hour than their White counterparts;

Whereas increased pay for workers in the child care and early education sectors improves the quality and continuity of care for young children, helps centers hire new staff and

improve conditions for children, and reflects the value of highly skilled work of caregivers;

Whereas a survey from the National Association for the Education of Young Children found 4 in 5 child care centers are understaffed;

Whereas to recruit and retain a qualified child care workforce for young children, child care and preschool workers with equivalent education and experience should be paid as much as K–12 staff;

Whereas a full-time living wage is needed for all child care workers to meet essential needs, yet nearly half of child care workers currently receive Federal income assistance to support the well-being of families;

Whereas the National Children’s Facilities Network estimates that at least \$23,000,000,000 is needed to bring existing facilities up to best practice standards;

Whereas the 2020 Government Accountability Survey estimated 26 percent of Head Start child care centers tested for lead in their drinking water, while 31 percent did not know if they had tested;

Whereas expansion and renovation of facilities will improve child health and expand opportunities for employment in the care economy, but there is no dedicated Federal program to invest in upgrading care facilities;

Whereas high-quality child care that works for everyone is essential for a strong economy and future, and working families also need universal preschool;

Whereas areas with new universal preschool programs have shown dramatic increases, as high as 10 percent, in maternal labor force participation;

Whereas universal preschool programs for 3 and 4 year-olds provide a particularly important opportunity for fostering racial and socioeconomic diversity because they allow students of all backgrounds to enroll for free;

Whereas, for every \$1 invested in universal preschool, \$9 in benefits, including better child health and increased earnings, is returned to the economy;

Whereas when families are guaranteed high-quality, flexible, available, and affordable child care and early childhood education, business productivity improves, parents have a greater likelihood of finding and keeping employment, and children do better in school and in life;

Whereas fixing the child care system is also an issue of racial justice;

Whereas making sure families of color have access to high-quality, affordable child care and preschool will help dismantle the systemic underinvestment in families and workers of color; and

Whereas, according to a 2022 study conducted by Child Care Aware of America, 16,000 child care providers permanently closed between December 2019 and March 2021: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives should
 2 pass robust child care legislation that will stabilize the
 3 child care industry and that will—

4 (1) provide child care assistance to all families
 5 that need it, especially low- and middle-income fami-
 6 lies who struggle to afford the cost of high-quality
 7 child care and who are too often left behind;

1 (2) make child care affordable, with no family
2 having to pay more than 7 percent of their income
3 for child care, and families most in need paying
4 nothing;

5 (3) make sure that child care is available so
6 that parents in today's 24-hour economy can access
7 high-quality care when and where they need it, dur-
8 ing weekends, nights, and as their job schedules
9 change, with options in a mixed-delivery system
10 across school, center, and home settings;

11 (4) guarantee that all families eligible for child
12 care will receive it, by investing in the expansion of
13 child care supply and creating a system that is ap-
14 propriately funded to meet the need of families in
15 the United States;

16 (5) improve the quality of child care by guaran-
17 teeing child care workers a living wage and wage
18 parity with K–12 staff for those with equivalent edu-
19 cation and experience, by improving training oppor-
20 tunities, by investing in long overdue infrastructure
21 upgrades to child care facilities, and by giving work-
22 ers a voice on the job to advocate for higher work-
23 place standards and standards of care for the chil-
24 dren they serve;

1 (6) expand access to full-day, full-school year
2 Head Start services, including Early Head Start,
3 and high-quality, universal preschool; and

4 (7) provide sufficient Federal investment to
5 make sure resources for both high-quality jobs and
6 affordable child care.

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