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(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. _____

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. BONAMICI submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

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

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

Whereas approximately 15,700,000 children under five are in a regular childcare arrangement;

Whereas even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States economy lost \$57,000,000,000 annually in unrealized earnings, productivity, and revenue because of the childcare crisis;

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

Whereas childcare is difficult to find for millions of families, when only 8 percent of childcare 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 childcare deserts;

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

Whereas, between 2010 and 2020, the cost of childcare increased by 25 percent;

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

Whereas high-quality childcare and early education, especially for disadvantaged children, help children thrive in school and beyond;

Whereas high-quality childcare 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 (CCDBG), the primary source of Federal funding support, exclude most American children from Federal childcare assistance;

Whereas CCDBG serves only a fraction of families, with just one in nine eligible children under age six receiving Federal childcare 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 childcare for their children;

Whereas the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the average hourly wage of childcare workers is \$12.24;

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

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

Whereas increased pay for workers in the childcare 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 caregivers' highly skilled work;

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

Whereas to recruit and retain a qualified childcare workforce for young children, childcare 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 childcare workers to meet their families' essential needs, yet nearly

half of childcare workers currently receive Federal income assistance to support their families' well-being;

Whereas the Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Health and Human Services found that in 96 percent of unannounced site visits in 9 States and 1 territory, there were 1 or more instances of potentially hazardous conditions and noncompliance with critical health and safety requirements;

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 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 childcare 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 ten percent, in maternal labor force participation;

Whereas universal preschool programs for three- and four-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 childcare 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 childcare system is also an issue of racial
justice;

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

Whereas the COVID–19 pandemic exacerbated existing prob-
lems in childcare and created new challenges, including
providing safe emergency care while providers are strug-
gling with significant reductions in revenue;

Whereas according to a 2022 study conducted by Child Care
Aware of America, 16,000 childcare providers perma-
nently closed between December 2019 and March 2021;
and

Whereas an analysis by the Center for American Progress es-
timated that, without adequate public support, 4,500,000
childcare slots could be lost permanently: Now, therefore,
be it

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

4 (1) provide childcare 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 childcare and who are too often left behind;

8 (2) make childcare affordable, with no family
9 having to pay more than 7 percent of their income

1 for childcare, and families most in need paying noth-
2 ing;

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

9 (4) guarantee that all families eligible for
10 childcare will receive it, by investing in the expan-
11 sion of childcare supply and creating a system that
12 is appropriately funded to meet the need of Amer-
13 ica's families;

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

23 (6) expand access to full-day, full-school year
24 Head Start services, including Early Head Start,
25 and high-quality, universal preschool; and

1 (7) provide sufficient Federal investment to
2 make sure resources for both high-quality jobs and
3 affordable childcare.