

COLORADO CHILDREN'S CAMPAIGN*Every Chance for Every Child*

Dear Members of the Public Health and Human Services Committee,

May 27, 2020

First, thank you for your service to our state during this difficult time. Your leadership and your committee's actions in the days and months ahead will be critical to children and families' health and well-being. Thank you for keeping the needs of children and families top of mind as you advance policies to support Coloradoans throughout the state.

Today we are submitting testimony **in support of HB 20-126** to Allow Home Child Care In Homeowners' Association Community. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the availability of child care was a significant strain on families' ability to work:

- Colorado only had licensed early care and education capacity for roughly 60% of the 247,000 children under 6 years old with all parents in the workforce.
- More than 12% of Colorado children under 6 had a parent who reported that they or another family member had to quit a job, not take a job, or greatly change their job because of problems with child care.
- Colorado's population of children under the age of four is expected to increase by 10% in the next two years and 22% by 2026. Demand for early childhood educators is expected to increase by nearly 20% in the next 10 years. That is faster than the anticipated growth for K-12 educators.
- In Colorado, 51 percent of all residents lived in a child care desert. Child care supply is especially low among certain populations, with 53 percent of rural families, 55 percent of low-income families and 56 percent of Hispanic/Latino families living in areas without enough licensed child care providers.

Given the challenges we had prior to the crisis and the disruption to offering child care that the pandemic has created, family child care availability will be an increasingly important piece of the child care landscape.

Supporting the availability of child care is vital to Colorado's economic recovery. Early care and education has tremendous spillover benefits for Colorado's economic development; for each new child care job created in our state, more than 1.5 additional jobs are created in the larger state economy. As such, removing the regulatory barriers that prevent this sector from supporting children and working families, as SB 20-126 does, is vital to our state's economic recovery.

To get Colorado's economy going again, in a safe and healthy way, will hinge on working parents' ability to access safe, affordable child care. Family child care homes offer small settings that can support group sizes that mitigate the community spread of COVID. As such, this bill helps create greater access to the child care that is safe for children and that families need to return to work. We encourage your support of SB 20-126.

Sincerely,

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