June 23, 2022

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

As the Senate continues deliberations on a new economic reconciliation package, we write to express support for the recent Murray-Kaine proposal on child care and early learning investments and urge its inclusion in the reconciliation package. This new proposal will provide children and working families with critical support to access quality, affordable child care and give child care providers additional resources they so desperately need to help get our economy back on track. Leaving child care out of an upcoming reconciliation package is unacceptable. Parents, especially women, need this investment to get back to work, and employers need their workers to have reliable child care.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the child care industry has faced numerous and steep challenges in their work to adequately serve the population most affected by the pandemic. Families were forced to choose between staying home to care for their children or returning to the workforce and relying on inefficient or scarce alternatives. Furthermore, as inflationary pressures increase and families face rising child care prices, this proposal will allow parents, families, and child care workers to offset part of that burden. The funding will allow those parents who have been unable to rejoin the workforce an opportunity to continue their careers, make sure that their children are adequately cared for, and support the existing child care workforce.

Supporting the child care workforce is a matter of both economic and racial justice, as the House recognized when it passed a robust child care package in the Build Back Better Act. Data reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that caregivers earn an average of just $12.24 per hour. And we know that the inadequate wages are disproportionately harmful to the women, and overwhelmingly women of color, who make up the care workforce. According to The Education Trust, Black child care workers earn an average of 78 cents less per hour than their white counterparts, even when controlling for education level. The investments in the Murray-Kaine proposal are long overdue updates that will provide these workers with better access to fair compensation and recognize the importance of their work.

We approve of the balanced approach in the proposal between strengthening existing programs and allowing for innovation. The Murray-Kaine plan will triple resources for the nation’s existing child care assistance program, the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). This funding would be available to every state, allowing parents and families across the country to access reliable and effective child care options. According to the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), more than 1 million new children and their families could receive child care assistance to lower their costs through the plan’s CCDBG investment. Additionally, we support the proposal’s dedicated funding for increasing wages for Head Start staff, expanding access to high-quality preschool, expanding the supply of high-quality child care, and improving compensation for the early childhood workforce—priorities supported in the House's Build Back Better Act.

We are also particularly supportive of the proposal’s creation of a pilot program that allows some states to test a child care system in which a broader set of low- and middle-income families will not pay more than 7 percent of their income for child care for children under age six. This pilot will incentivize innovation and reform that is desperately needed in the field.
As parents look to return to the workforce and workers in all industries aim to deal with inflationary price increases, child care funding remains crucial to fostering a strong care and early education system and strengthening our economy. Thank you for your consideration of our request, we look forward to working with you on this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress

Chrissy Houlahan  
Member of Congress

Tim Himes  
Member of Congress

A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress
Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress

Katherine M. Clark  
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress
G. K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress

Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress

Marie Newman  
Member of Congress

Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

Sharice L. Davids  
Member of Congress
Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

Ian Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Angie Craig  
Member of Congress

Dean Phillips  
Member of Congress

Brenda Lawrence  
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Cynthia Axne
Member of Congress

Kathy E. Manning
Member of Congress

Karen Bass
Member of Congress

Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress
Shontel M. Brown  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

Al Lawson  
Member of Congress

Mary Gay Scanlon  
Member of Congress

Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress

Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.  
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

Ann Kirkpatrick  
Member of Congress

Colin Z. Allred  
Member of Congress
Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress

MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress

Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress
David E. Price  
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

Bill Foster  
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress

Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress

Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress

Peter Welch  
Member of Congress
Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

David J. Trone
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress
Jason Crow  
Member of Congress

Josh Harder  
Member of Congress

Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress

Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress
Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Troy Carter
Member of Congress

Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress

Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress

Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress
Susan Wild  
Member of Congress

John B. Larson  
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress

Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress

Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress

Kaiali‘i Kahele  
Member of Congress

Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

Cc: Chair Patty Murray, Chairman Bobby Scott, and Senator Tim Kaine