

May 3, 2022

Hello Representative,

I am writing to you today as a small business owner in Jefferson County. I have been a licensed family childcare home provider for over 22 years. Not only is this my chosen profession but it is also a passion of mine. I strongly advocate for the quality education and care of our youngest children and making sure they are in safe environments.

Today I am writing to you about [SB22-213 Child Care Support Programs](#). **I am requesting that you approve an amendment for this bill that supports child care LICENSURE.** ECEA is working with Representatives to help prepare an amendment that supports licensure. PLEASE vote to accept this amendment. As an individual who started my career in Early Childhood Education (ECE) as a qualified legal exempt child care program, I truly believe the path to licensure as the path to high and safe quality of care and early education.

The Colorado general assembly has worked so hard on the behalf of the child care industry over the last two years to remove barriers for family childcare home business owners as well as advocating for the early childhood education community. The child care industry and Colorado's senators and representatives have worked hard to remove barriers for family childcare home and business owners. [SB21-199 Remove Barriers To Certain Public Opportunities](#), [SB21-077 Remove Lawful Presence Verification Credentialing](#), [HB21-1222 Regulation Of Family Child Care Homes](#), [SB20-126 Allow Home Child Care In Homeowners' Association Community](#) all passed in the last two years to make it possible for anyone who wants to and is qualified to open a license family child care home business. The new Department of early childhood is also offering a \$5000 sign-on bonus to anyone who opens a new license family childcare home. **There is NO REASON why an individual cannot become a licensed child care if they want to. This bill REDUCES the incentive for individuals to become licensed. Let's support our businesses that choose to be licensed and regulated.**

While I overall support SB22-213, there is one area that is very, very concerning to me. The Senate passed amendment [J.001](#) and it is lines 21 through 24 that I am quite concerned with. This amendment and line 21-24 is funneling \$7.5 million and the hiring of 8.8 full-time employees to support the Friend, Family, Neighbor (FFN) child care sector. If you are not familiar with this sector of child care, it has primarily meant for nannies, nanny shares, neighbors, babysitters, and family members watching relatives. **This is a completely unregulated sector a family child care.** But they are supposed to still follow child care law and child care licensing rules and regulations in regards to the total number of children allowed in care. Earlier this year, the child care industry and the Office of Early Childhood requested funding and 3.5 full-time employees to fund the Safe Child Care Task Force after passing the [SB21-201 "Elle Matthews Act for Increased Safety in Child Care"](#). The safe child care task force would

have helped enforce Colorado's law and child care rules and regulations, assured that FFNs were following the law, and forced unlicensed illegal childcare is to close. However, unfortunately the JBC chose not recognize the dire need for this and refused the request. I am quite concerned about funneling \$7.5 million into an unregulated sector when we couldn't even afford to hire 3.5 full-time employees to enforce Colorado's current law and child care regulations. **Shouldn't we make sure our current laws and regulations are being followed first?**

Licensed childcare businesses are struggling to keep our doors open and continuing to serve family child families. **This money would be put to better use to support businesses who are already licensed and following current rules, regulations and Colorado law.** There is no need to funnel \$7.5 million into an unregulated industry. We would never do this in any other industry and I don't understand why we would do it now. When SB21-213 comes before you, please, please, please question why we were funneling \$7.5 million and hiring 8.8 full-time employees to support an unregulated sector when the rest of the childcare industry is very regulated.

EXAMPLES OF UNLICENSED PROGRAMS WHO HAVE MADE THE NEWS:

Unlicensed home daycare provider facing child abuse charge

Three cease and desist orders were served to the provider last summer, months before a young girl was injured, court records show.

<https://www.9news.com/article/news/crime/home-daycare-child-abuse-charge/73-789f4e93-2555-4a73-a5c1-6cc1b9dd4f7b>

Parker daycare provider arrested in infant death

Amanda Anderson, 34, received seven cease-and-desist letters

<https://castlerocknewspress.net/stories/parker-daycare-provider-arrested-in-infant-death,315284>

After 18 deaths, state human services dept. reviewing protocol of unlicensed, illegal day cares

The move comes after acknowledging at least 18 deaths from 2010 through 2019.

<https://www.9news.com/article/news/investigations/state-reviewing-handling-unlicensed-illegal-day-cares/73-546ae94f-7398-40b4-89dc-417a327d1f65>

Unlicensed Colorado day care had been warned to stop operating 6 years before death of infant

Despite being told to stop operating multiple times, court documents say the woman operating an unlicensed day care in Douglas County continued to do so.

<https://www.9news.com/article/news/investigations/colorado-unlicensed-daycare-infant-death/73-1da8d2cf-0029-4e1b-bb7a-4891e1cb4825>

Fort Morgan day care where 1-year-old died had been given 14 cease and desist orders, DHS says

"Somebody should be responsible for the actions," said the boy's grandfather.

<https://www.9news.com/article/news/investigations/fort-morgan-daycare-toddler-died-14-cease-desist-orders/73-f72ae620-71fa-43cc-8db7-660a85fc077>

Daycare Couple Are Parents Worst Nightmare

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIPFHbxIxHY&t=224s>

Carrie Kennedy

Early Childhood Educator

Licensed Experienced Care Provider



May 3, 2022

Testimony in Support of SB 22-213: Child Care Support Programs

To Chair Michaelson Jenet and Members of the House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services Committee:

My name is Christina Walker and I am the director of policy and advocacy at Clayton Early Learning. Clayton supports a whole child, whole family approach to the earliest years – serving about 500 children, birth to Kindergarten entry across the state. We believe that healthy early childhood development offers one of the most powerful levers for ending inequality and creating thriving communities. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to share our support for Senate Bill 213.

Quality child care is a necessity for working families with young children and the health of Colorado's economy, yet the number of licensed child care facilities have declined over the last decade. [The problem worsened due to COVID-19](#), as 7-10 percent of child care providers temporarily or permanently closed their doors and 23 percent of the early childhood education workforce was laid off or furloughed. This left one-third of Colorado families without the child care they needed. Financial support to the industry provides the opportunity for parents to remain in or return to the workforce.

Colorado's economic recovery from the effects of COVID-19 relies on increasing access to high-quality child care, strengthening the early childhood workforce, and supporting the parents/caregivers of our youngest learners. The state has federal dollars ready to invest, and this bill funds existing and effective strategies to address these important issues in all settings where children grow and learn. The investment in child care programs of all types – licensed, unlicensed (family, friend, and neighbor), and employer-based - will ensure that existing programs are able to remain open, workforce is retained, new programs can open, and all caregivers are provided the support they need and deserve. This bill also takes a holistic approach to supporting the early childhood workforce and parents/caregivers of young children. As a provider of early care and learning services we count ourselves among the more than 70 percent of child care centers that report challenges in finding qualified staff. Therefore, Clayton appreciates the inclusion of grant and scholarship funding that will help programs like ours attract and retain early childhood teachers, home visitors, early intervention specialists, and mental health consultants. Clayton also provides home visiting services to parents who are interested in supporting their children's learning in their own home. We strongly believe that parents are a child's first and most important teacher, and these funds will support proven programs that ensure children enter kindergarten ready to learn and empower parents to advocate on behalf of their children and family.

The research is clear that the early years are the most effective time to invest and lay a foundation for future learning and achievement. Colorado has made great strides supporting our state's youngest children and their families, but we have more to do to ensure that all children are healthy, valued and thriving. We at Clayton Early Learning believe this bill will signal that Colorado supports the needs of our youngest children, their families, and the early childhood providers working across our state. Thank you for your time and please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Best,

Christina Walker
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Colorado House of Representatives
House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services Committee
Colorado State Capitol
200 East Colfax Avenue, Room 346
Denver, CO 80203

Re: Hearing Item: Senate Bill 22-213 (Child Care Support Programs, Fields, Sonnenberg, Valdez A., Tipper)

Dear House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services,

On behalf of the 60 EPIC members consisting of Colorado business executives and organizational leaders, EPIC is urging your support of SB22-213 to provide innovative and responsive funding for child care programs, early childhood educators, and caregivers across Colorado. Our members advocate for solutions that help employers attract and retain the talent they need for today, while ensuring our future workforce and children today have quality early childhood care and education experiences that support their future career success. SB22-213 and its related programmatic investments will support these goals.

The steady decline in access to quality, affordable child care and early education is taking a toll on children, families, employers, communities, and our economy. The severe lack of child care in our state – estimated as a shortage of over 90,000 slots by the Bipartisan Policy Center, comes at a \$2.2 Billion annual cost to our state economy.

Child care businesses have been crushed by the pandemic and need help with their financial recovery, while others are ready to start new businesses or expand their buildings so our children and families have access to the child care services they need. Workforce development and career pathway resources created through this bill will help us retain and recruit the thousands of teaching professionals we need to ensure our early learning programs can operate and universal preschool can successfully be implemented in Colorado. We also have thousands of family members, neighbors, and caregivers who are supporting young children across the state and will benefit from access to additional training and resources related to child development, health, and safety.

As our economy recovers and universal preschool rolls out across our state, it is imperative that we do all we can to support and increase investments in caregivers and the early childhood care and education workforce and infrastructure. Many, including employers across our state, are ready to step up and answer the call to make sure our communities have the child care and early childhood supports they so desperately need.

We ask for your support of this bill and stand ready to provide any additional information that would be helpful to the members of the House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services Committee.

Respectfully,

Nicole Riehl
President and CEO
Executives Partnering to Invest in Children

Cc: House Public & Behavioral Health & Human Services Committee