

Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs

05/04/2024 Upon Adjournment

HB24-1223 Improved Access to the Child Care Assistance Prog

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
<p>Michael Cooke For Council for a Strong America Colorado</p>	<p>Good afternoon, members of the Committee. My name is Michael Cooke, and I am the Colorado State Director for Council for a Strong America, a national bipartisan nonprofit that promotes evidence-based solutions to ensure our children are prepared for successful lives.</p> <p>I am writing today in support of HB24-1223, to help ensure dependable and affordable child care for working families. My office released a report last month that identifies the economic impact this state suffers because of the lack of accessible and affordable child care in our state. The hit to Colorado’s economy is \$2.7 billion annually, and parents bear more than half of that amount in lost earnings from missed time at work and impacted future earnings from limited career advancement opportunities.</p> <p>We know from the research we conducted that low-income families are disproportionately affected by this impact and the burden on them is greater. We also know that \$2.7 billion is an underestimate, as we only looked at infant and toddler care in Colorado. The average cost of child care for infants and toddlers alone in center-based care is nearing \$20,000 per year, more than the cost of in-state college tuition at a state institution, and many of our families cannot afford that, yet without it, they cannot work.</p> <p>This legislation will create a streamlined application process for parents and update the payment model for providers, making child care more accessible and affordable for families.</p> <p>I urge your support on HB24-1223. Thank you for your time.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p>

	Michael Cooke
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Testimony as prepared for delivery in support of HB 24-1223: Improved Access to the Child Care Assistance Program, by Lauren Corboy, Senior Policy Analyst at the Colorado Children's Campaign

Senate Health and Human Services Committee

May 3, 2024

Madame Chair and of the Senate Health and Human Services committee,

My name is Lauren Corboy and I am a Senior Policy Analyst at the Colorado Children's Campaign. I am writing today in support of House Bill 24-1223, Improved Access to the Child Care Assistance Program.

The Colorado Children's Campaign is a non-profit, non-partisan, policy, research and advocacy organization, committed to securing every chance for every child in Colorado since our founding in 1985. That includes advocating for public policies and investments that remove barriers for most impacted children and families and improve well-being for every child and family.

The Campaign supports this bill because it will improve the Colorado Child Care Assistance program, or CCCAP, by lowering barriers for families to apply, decreasing burden for the provider workforce, and increasing access to quality child care.

Simplifying the application process by only collecting the information necessary to determine eligibility will mean that more families are likely to both apply and be successful in their application, leading to more children served. The current application, which differs by county, can ask extraneous and sometimes overly invasive questions, deterring many families who are in need of services.

This bill would also make it simpler and more financially feasible for providers to participate in CCCAP, which would increase the number of providers available to eligible families, thereby expanding access. Reimbursing providers for enrollment, rather than attendance, means that providers will not be financially penalized for factors outside of their control (such as whether a child is sick or a family missed the bus that day), making it more likely that they will accept children who qualify for CCCAP.

Finally, this bill will align with recently released federal guidelines about the Child Care and Development Fund, the primary federal funding source for CCCAP. Among other things, these new guidelines require providers to be paid based on enrollment rather than attendance, limit co-pays to 7% of family income, and call for a simplified application process, all of which are part of HB 24-1223.

All together, the components of HB 24-1223 improve CCCAP, better supporting families with young children across our state so that they can have the support they need to thrive.

Thank you, Madame Chair and members of the committee. I urge your support of HB 24-1223.

Lauren Corboy, MEd

Senior Policy Analyst, Colorado Children's Campaign

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Members of the Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee,

My name is Lex Loutzenhiser and I am a Policy Manager with Illuminate Colorado, a statewide nonprofit working to strengthen families, organizations, and communities to prevent child maltreatment. I am submitting written testimony **to ask you for a 'yes' vote on HB24-1223 Improved Access to Child Care Assistance.**

I want to highlight two main reasons Illuminate supports HB24-1223:

1. **The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) promotes protective factors that reduce instances of child maltreatment.** This bill promotes access to concrete supports in times of need, one of five research-informed protective factors for preventing child maltreatment¹. Increasing access to quality, affordable child care through CCAP, a concrete support in times of need, reduces instances of child abuse and neglect. Research shows that each additional month a low-income mother receives a child care subsidy results in a 16% decrease in the odds of a child neglect report and a 14% decrease in the odds of a physical abuse report in the following year.² By increasing access to CCAP, HB24-1223 promotes access to child care, preventing child maltreatment.
2. **Expanding CCAP to caregivers who are accessing substance use treatment increases access for families with increased risk of child maltreatment.** Research shows that difficulty finding child care is one of the strongest predictors of self-reported neglect, including severity of substance use and other mental health challenges.³ In addition to child care allowing access to treatment, child care can be a key component in maximizing safety when caregivers use substances by ensuring children have appropriate caregivers in both low risk and high risk scenarios.⁴ In Colorado, only 3.1% of treatment providers provide child care to parents accessing treatment services.⁵ HB24-1223 increases access to CCAP for families who need it most by adding engagement in substance use treatment as a qualifying activity to receive CCAP.

When families have access to concrete supports, we strengthen the foundation for families to thrive. **We urge you to support increased access to CCAP by voting 'yes' on HB24-1223.**

Sincerely,

Lex Loutzenhiser, Policy Manager

lloutzenhiser@illuminatecolorado.org

¹ Center for the Study of Social Policy. (n.d.) About Strengthening Families and the protective factors framework. Retrieved From:

<https://cssp.org/our-work/projects/protective-factors-framework/>

² Yang, M. Y., Maguire-Jack, K., Showalter, K., Kim, Y. K., & Slack, K. S. (2019). Child care subsidy and child maltreatment. *Child & Family Social Work*, 24(4), 547-554. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12635>.

³ Cash, S. J., & Wilke, D. J. (2003). An ecological model of maternal substance abuse and child neglect: Issues, analyses, and recommendations. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 73(4), 392-404. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0002-9432.73.4.392>.

⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2015). *World Drug Report 2015*. United Nations publication, Sales No.E.15.XI.6. Retrieved from http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr2015/World_Drug_Report_2015.pdf

⁵ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2022). 2022 State Profile - National Substance Use and Mental Health Services Survey (N-SUMHSS). Retrieved From: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/reports/rpt42713/NSUMHSS-State-Profile-22.pdf>