

House Education
 04/27/2023 Upon Adjournment
 SB23-269 Colorado Preschool Program Provider Bonus Payments
 Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
<p>Melanie Worley For Council for a Strong America, Colorado</p>	<p>April 26, 2023</p> <p>Members of the Colorado House Education Committee,</p> <p>I write today to urge your support for the bi-partisan Senate Bill 23-269, regarding universal preschool provider participation bonuses.</p> <p>Early care and education for children under age five is essential to supporting the success of our youngest children and their working parents. Access to safe, reliable early care and education supports brain development and academic and social emotional preparedness for school, and it boosts parent participation in the workforce and strengthens Colorado’s economy.</p> <p>Colorado is lacking capacity in licensed child care, meaning that regardless of the cost or level of comfort with the provider, there simply is not enough care available to meet demand. Often referred to as “child care deserts,” these shortage areas impact both rural and urban communities. (A child care desert is defined as a census tract with at least 50 children under age five and either no licensed child care provider in the neighborhood or at least three children competing for one open spot.) As the state rolls out the new universal preschool program, it is essential we ensure that there are enough preschool providers – both school-based and community-based providers – who are willing and able to participate in the state-funded program and serve the children whose families are seeking care with financial support from the state.</p> <p>Senate Bill 23-269 will provide financial incentives to all universal preschool providers who have not previously participate in a state-run preschool program. Additional financial incentive will be paid to providers who maintain or expand their licensed capacity to serve infants and toddlers. This one-time incentive program is an important strategy to help support and bolster capacity at a time of significant change for the early care and education sector. The infant / toddler bonus is particularly important to ensure that the roll-out of preschool subsidies does not negatively impact access to care for younger children.</p> <p>Council for a Strong America, Colorado, a bipartisan nonprofit committed to ensuring the next generation of Americans will be successful, productive members of society, is in strong support of Senate Bill 23-269. I urge your YES vote when the bill is presented before the House Education Committee.</p>

	<p>Thank you for your service.</p> <p>Respectfully, Melanie Worley Deputy Director, Council for a Strong America, Colorado</p>
<p>Shelley Smith For Eagle County School District and Eagle River Valley LCO</p>	<p>1). I am not sure due the the dollar amount the bonus will draw providers that thus far have not been willing to be a UPK provider it will acknowledge the extra work that has been required by providers to be part of the system. I do agree that providers that have been part of the State System had a lighter lift so allocating funds to new providers make sense.</p> <p>2). I am glad to see that the bill was changed to acknowledge all providers that maintained or expended infant and toddler care. For all providers, regardless of state funding sources, providing quality infant and toddler care is cost prohibitive and any additional funds to these program will help to maintain quality be it quality ratios, training, etc.</p> <p>3). Any support to increase access in childcare deserts is a good use of funds.</p> <p>Thank you for taking my feedback into account as you make decisions about this bill.</p> <p>Shelley Smith</p>
<p>Lydia Waligorski For Clayton Early Learning</p>	<p>Hello Committee Members, Thank you for allowing us to submit written testimony in support of SB23-269 as we support Early Childhood Providers, families and most importantly children aged birth-5.</p> <p>Several states have experienced challenges navigating implementation of universal pre-kindergarten work, and often those challenges lead to a decrease in the availability of slots for infants aged 0-3. There is also an administrative burden to providers in navigating new state systems, and keeping up to date to changes and regulations and allowable reimbursements.</p> <p>This bill very thoughtfully recognizes those challenges and offers some supports to child care providers by creating modest incentives for sustaining 0-3 spaces, allowing existing providers to apply for the credit, and by incentivizing new providers to participate in the new program in geographic areas where families struggle to find care and early education options.</p> <p>We support this bill and ask for your yes vote. Thank you.</p> <p>Lydia Waligorski, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, Clayton Early Learning</p>

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Colorado House of Representatives
House Education Committee
Colorado State Capitol
200 East Colfax Avenue, Room 346
Denver, CO 80203

Hearing Date: April 27, 2023

RE: Senate Bill 23-269, Colorado Preschool Program Provider Bonus Payments

Dear House Education Committee,

On behalf of the nearly 70 business executives from a range of industries and communities across Colorado, EPIC would like to request your support for SB 23-269 to help recruit and retain the preschool providers our state so desperately needs.

This bill creates financial incentives for new preschool providers critical to the needs of working families and the successful implementation of Universal Pre-K. We need a broad range of community-based preschool providers to serve nearly 30,000 children across the state who are enrolled in UPK, and these bonuses will help to ensure that we have them, especially in rural areas and communities with low capacity.

It is incredibly difficult for child care providers to make the numbers work to keep their businesses running and serving their communities. EPIC has championed the mixed-delivery model of UPK since the beginning, and we know that any financial resource we can provide helps keep community preschools afloat.

The shortage of infant and toddler care is even more acute than preschool, so it is also incredibly important that we reward those providers who choose to retain or expand their capacity for serving infants and toddlers.

As the business voice in support of early childhood in Colorado, EPIC believes that investments in our early childhood care and education system are critical to a strong economy and competitive business environment. The provider bonus payments will help to ensure that the rollout of UPK is successful in our communities and that our fragile infant and toddler care capacity is maintained.

We ask for your support of SB 23-269, and we are willing and able to provide any information that would be helpful to you.

Respectfully,

Nicole Riehl
President and CEO
Executives Partnering to Invest in Children