



April 27, 2022

Testimony for HB22-1010

Thank you Madam Chair, Vice-Chair, and members of the Committee:

My name is Carrie Kennedy, and I have been a family child care home provider in Jefferson County for over 22 years. I also serve as the Public Relations Coordinator for the Colorado Association of Family Child Care (CAFCC). I am here today as a representative of CAFCC and the estimated 1,500 licensed family child care home (FCCH) providers in Colorado. We greatly appreciate your attention and dedication to Colorado's young children, their families, and the community of providers who care and educate them. The passage of HB22-1010 will have a huge and immediate positive impact for Colorado's Early Childhood Educators. CAFCC is asking for your "yes" vote.

Individuals who enter into the Early Childhood Education (ECE) field do so out of a love for children and desire to educate and care for our future leaders. We don't become early educators and care providers for the power, glory, money or easy days. In fact, these things are often furthest from our grasp. We work long hard days that are filled with challenges and stress. Yet we stay because we know what we do makes a difference in the lives of children and their families. But at the end of the day, we have our own bills to pay and families to support.

I'm sure you have heard and read many articles about the financial troubles of the child care industry. Tuition is high for families, and pay for workers is incredibly low. Most of the industry earns less per hour than fast food workers and must rely on public assistance. This is even worse when you look at the family child care home industry. These providers and educators often work 60 to 80 hours a week with no overtime pay or benefits. HB22-1010



can make a real difference in the lives of the ECE workforce. A refundable tax credit that is based upon an individual's Early Childhood Professional Credential (ECPC) promotes and encourages individuals to improve their professional development and skills, provides children and families with higher quality educators without raising tuition costs, and gives the workforce financial relief when filing their taxes.

CAFCC is also requesting a "yes" vote of an amendment which would eliminate the requirement that credentials be held for at least 6 months during the tax year. Currently the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and the Professional Development Information System (PDIS) has a 4-5 month backlog processing applications. This backlog will eliminate many qualified and deserving individuals from receiving the well deserved tax credit due to no fault of their own.

Again, we would like to greatly express our gratitude for your support of early childhood educators. The ECE community has many faces and our struggles may vary depending on our region, our resources, and our business model. However, at the end of the day, we all are in desperate need of relief, which is why I, and CAFCC, support HB 1010 with amendments. Your "yes" vote tells the ECE workforce, "We see you. We appreciate you. We value the work you do."

Thank you. I am available for questions.



The Bell Policy Center

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Early Childhood Educator Tax Credit (HB22-1010)

Testimony to the Senate Finance Committee

Julie Pecaut, Director of Strategy and Operations • April 27, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB22-1010. My name is Julie Pecaut, and I am the Director of Strategy and Operations for the Bell Policy Center. The Bell Policy Center provides policymakers, advocates, and the public with reliable resources to create a practical policy agenda that promotes economic mobility for every Coloradan.

We wanted to share a few points relevant to the bill from key findings in our recent research series, [Quality Child Care in Colorado: A Cost Study](#):

- Even though many families struggle to afford care, our new Colorado Cost of Care Model shows that market rates are not currently covering the full cost of providing that care in most areas. That difference is being shouldered primarily by the low wages of early education workers, as well as by child care centers and providers themselves.
- We do not have enough qualified early childhood educators to meet current needs, and the pandemic has created additional vacancies that child care providers are struggling to fill. Low pay is the main factor driving the difficulties in recruiting qualified workers, and a primary reason many dedicated early childhood educators are choosing to leave the field.
- The need for more qualified early educators who reflect the culture and language of the children they serve is especially great, as is the need for more opportunities for educators of color to serve as lead teachers.

By providing targeted assistance to our early childhood educators, we will help to address their economic stability, help them remain in the field, and recognize their commitment and time as they build on their credentials and expertise in child development.

Research has shown that targeted tax credits are powerful anti-poverty tools, and that putting money back into the pockets of those most likely to spend it benefits our economy. While the proposed credits are not intended as a comprehensive solution to the wage issues faced by the early care and education sector, they represent an important investment in the care and education of our youngest learners, and in the people who provide that care.

This investment in our early educators, their families, and their communities is why we support HB22-1010 and urge a yes vote. Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony, and thank you to Senator Buckner and Senator Kirkmeyer as well as Representative Sirota and Representative Van Beber for bringing the bill.



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Colorado State Capitol
200 East Colfax Avenue, Room 346
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Re: Hearing Item: House Bill HB 22-1010
(Early Childhood Educator Income Tax Credit: Sirota, Van Beber, Buckner, Kirkmeyer)

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

We are writing on behalf of Executives Partnering to Invest in Children (EPIC) to urge your support of House Bill 22-1010, which will provide a meaningful step toward growing and retaining the early educator workforce in Colorado. EPIC serves as the business community's voice for early childhood policies and solutions that support our workforce of today while developing a great workforce for tomorrow. Our bipartisan membership of over 60 high-level business leaders represent companies and various industries across Colorado. As members of EPIC, these early childhood business champions create innovative and fiscally sound solutions that work for children, families, employers, and our state.

The COVID crisis has further exposed the fragility of the child care sector while underlining the importance of access to child care for working families across Colorado. We have seen a steep decline in availability and access to child care, which has been worsened by the pandemic and is affecting economic recovery. Our state's inability to recruit and retain quality early childhood educators is a direct contributor to our inability to meet child care demands for the larger workforce in Colorado.

Strengthening and supporting the success of the early education workforce is vital to the sustainability and recovery of our economy. The recent economic strain and catastrophic job losses in the child care sector have magnified a series of challenges that were approaching their precipice such as a history of underinvestment and low wages, inequitable access to benefits, and stressful work environments. While we are still in the beginning of addressing these issues we believe the Early Childhood Educator Income Tax Credit will directly help to grow and retain this workforce through the tangible financial benefits it will provide for quality educators.

After conversations with business leaders and stakeholders in the early childhood community over the past several months, we feel this bill is an important next step and will impact the stability and success of the Universal Preschool program by supporting professionals interested in or currently pursuing this career pathway. We ask for your support of this bill and welcome any clarifying questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Nicole Riehl
President and CEO

My name is Linda Schiller and I am writing on behalf of Young Invincibles to support HB 22-1010 because child-care is an issue of gender, economic, and racial equity for young adults and young families in Colorado. In 2021, I researched and published a report about women's workforce participation and child-care, and I found that the pandemic drastically worsened the child-care shortage, which has had a profound impact on women's ability to work. Passing House Bill 1010 is an important step we must take to ensure that the child-care workforce can continue their necessary work in supporting the rest of our state's workforce.

Child-care is a twofold issue of equity. First, the child-care sector is disproportionately composed of women, especially women of color, and the pandemic has heavily impacted these providers. Second, child-care shortages disproportionately impact women, as well as communities of color and rural communities.

We cannot serve Colorado families and workers without first supporting our child-care workforce. Even though the child-care sector is essential to the rest of the workforce, 98% of occupations pay more than early childhood education and child-care. Over half of minority-owned child-care centers in the U.S. are at risk of shutting down, and over a third of all child-care providers are considering shutting down in the coming year. Colorado is no exception to these workforce losses, and this is an urgent problem for us because the number of young children in Colorado under the age of four is projected to increase by 22% by 2026.

The child-care shortage does not impact everyone the same. Child-care deserts, or areas which have an inadequate supply of licensed child-care, are more prevalent in areas with historically marginalized populations, and thus child-care shortages may drastically impact these populations. For example, nearly three in five Latinx/Hispanic families live in child-care deserts. Rural areas also face child-care shortages more frequently than suburban neighborhoods, especially high-income suburban areas. Child-care also disproportionately impacts women, who are often the primary caregivers in their households. In Young Invincibles' 2021 survey of Colorado women, 32% of respondents reported calling out of work because of child-care issues between May 2020 and May 2021.

By increasing compensation for our child-care workforce, we can protect marginalized communities from child-care shortages. It is time for us to support our workers both in and out of the child-care sector. I support House Bill 22-1010 Early Childhood Educator Income Tax Credit and I urge you to vote yes. Thank you!

Testimony in favor of House Bill 22-1010-Early Childhood Educator Tax Credit

Senate Finance Committee

April 2022

Lindsey Levin-Salamon, Director BMH-BJ Preschool

Chair Gonzales and members of the Senate Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of the Early Childhood Educator Tax Credit (House Bill 22-1010).

I am Lindsey Levin-Salamon. For the last six years, I have had the privilege of directing BMH-BJ Preschool in Denver. I began teaching young children 15 years ago, right out of college, and then moved into the role of preschool director.

BMH-BJ offers a unique blend of emergent, child-centered curriculum in a warm, intimate, Jewish environment. We serve 110 children and families. Many of the teachers at BMH-BJ, have been with us for more than a decade.

The teachers at our school are phenomenal. They use art, songs, and movement to teach children.

Our center offers early care and extended care into the evenings to accommodate families' work schedules. BMH-BJ teachers put in a full day of work, and then some!

AT BMH-BJ, we recognize that teachers are the backbone of quality early education. We have gone to great lengths to pay them throughout all COVID-19 related closures. BMH-BJ has increased teacher wages as the cost of living increases. Nonetheless, teacher wages are not sufficient.

Many of our teachers work between two to four jobs to make ends meet. It is difficult to watch these skilled, committed, experienced professionals forced to work so hard.

Yet, as a preschool, our profit margin is razor-thin. Like so many early learning centers, further increasing tuition for families, to increase revenue, is not a viable business option.

My life's calling is to support children, which in turn means supporting teachers. That is why I am here to ask for your support of House Bill 22-1010.

In its briefing about the future of preschool in Colorado, Early Milestones notes that the ECE sector faces severe challenges in recruiting and incentivizing a qualified workforce.

The ECE field's annual turnover is four times higher than elementary school teachers. Low pay is a key factor in this high turnover.

House Bill 22-1010 represents an opportunity for Colorado to offer critical support to early childhood educators in the form of a tax credit. This can positively impact teachers' take-home income and thereby retention of staff.

Every day, teachers do so much for young children in our state, now is the time for Colorado to do more for teachers.

I ask that you vote in favor of House Bill 22-1010 to support early childhood educators.

Thank you for your time and consideration.