

SUBMITTED WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Committee House Public Health Care & Human Services
Meeting Date 11/30/2020 Upon Adjournment

Registered	Bill Number	First Name	Last Name	Position on Bill
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11/30/2020 10:01	HB20B-1002	Annalise	Romoser	For
11/30/2020 8:58	HB20B-1002	Ben	Poswalk	For

Witness Signup List

11/30/2020 11:03 HB20B-1002

Dania

Kasim

For

11/30/2020 11:22 HB20B-1002

Debbie

Kunz

For

Witness Signup List

11/30/2020 12:15 HB20B-1002

Erika

Echeverria

For

Witness Signup List

11/30/2020 12:07 HB20B-1002	Michael	Cooke	For
11/30/2020 11:57 HB20B-1002	Ruth	Aponte	For

Witness Signup List

Representing

Status Testifying

Save the Children Action Network
Paradise Place Preschool

Open Submitted text
Open Submitted text

Witness Signup List

Rising Star Early Learning Center

Open Submitted text

Bal Swan Children's Center

Open Submitted text

Witness Signup List

SCAN. Save the Children Action Network

Open Submitted text

Witness Signup List

Council for a Strong America

Counties and Commissioners Acting Together

Open

Submitted text

Open

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Text of Testimony

Thank you to the Committee Chairs for the opportunity to provide written testimony, today, in favor of Emergency Relief Programs for the Child Care Sector. I am Annalise Romoser, the Colorado state manager for Save the Children Action Network (SCAN). SCAN has approximately 10,000 supporters in Colorado. I provide testimony today in my role as SCAN's state manager. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 51% of Coloradans lived in child care deserts. The child care crisis in Colorado has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Child care providers have had to close their doors. In many cases the costs of operating with pandemic restrictions are too high. Yet in many cases, child care providers have found ways to make it through, piecing together funding streams, adjusting class sizes or pausing programs. They are working hard to provide excellent care to children in the face of unprecedented challenges, but they need additional support to survive. I have heard dozens of stories from parents and child care providers, across the state, who need support. The costs of operating during COVID-19 are many and are high, yet families in Colorado need child care now, and they will need it when COVID-19 is under control and parents, and caretakers, are able to return to work. A recent survey of child care providers found that 40% of providers worried they would need to close permanently without additional public assistance. 73% of programs indicated that they have or will engage in layoffs, furloughs, and/or pay cuts. Care takers and parents must have child care if they are to return to work—which is essential for families and for Colorado's economic recovery. In Colorado, from August to September roughly 21,000 women entered the labor force compared to the 52,000 men. From February to September, the size of the labor force for women with kids shrank by 42,000 women, compared to an increase in the size of the labor force of women without kids increasing by approximately 40,000 women. Parents need child care, Colorado needs child care, and most importantly, kids need quality child care. Research shows how beneficial quality early learning is to children. The support that consistent, quality child care offers kids is invaluable. This is why I urge you to invest in kids and support the Emergency Relief Programs for the Childhood Sector. Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony.

Please support early childhood education. It is the future of our state and vital to our economy.

Witness Signup List

These are difficult times for all industries. The child care industry has been hit very hard. Many centers have closed their doors permanently and other are barely hanging on. Grants like PPP have helped centers hang on a bit longer.

Rising Star is located in Sheridan, CO. We are a Colorado Shines level 4 center that provides high quality education and child care to a high needs population. 85% of our students are on Colorado Child Assistance program (CCAP) and about 90% qualify for free and reduced meals. Since the pandemic started, our attendance has decreased by more than 50%. In the beginning of March 2020 our average attendance was 125 students per day. Currently we are at an attendance of 55-60 students per day. We mostly serve families that have essential jobs. Our income has been cut by half, yet our expense (except for payroll), have increased. PPE expenses have tripled, The cost of food has gone up by 20%-30% percent. The cost of Sanitizing and maintaining the center has gone up by 30%. Payroll expense has dropped by 20%. In order to keep our quality staff working, we dropped everyone hours by 10% and joined Unemployment Work Share program. What kept our center going is the fact that CCAP paid many absences in the months of April, May, June, and July. That helped us keep our doors open. In August those paid absences dropped. The monies received from CCAP and the PPP grant have kept us afloat.

In the beginning of November despite all the preventive COVID measures we had in place, we had a COVID outbreak and with the help of Tri-County Health we made the decision to close our center for two weeks. This hit us hard, two week no income! We reopened the center on november 23rd and our 50-60 students came back. The families have essential jobs and need the care. While we were closed many of our families left their children with family and neighbors or had to stay home with their children. Currently we are moving along hoping things will get better, keeping all our COVID prevention measures in place and hoping that we can keep everyone healthy.

I am writing to encourage you to support HB20B-1002bill, sponsored by Kipp and Landgraf, to support the childcare industry in the state of Colorado. This bill will provide emergency relief funds for the childcare industry so the industry does not implode due to financial strains from the pandemic.

Already, many childcare centers have closed their doors as the cost of operating becomes too great with the inconsistencies of attendance and the costs associated with cleaning and disinfecting.

Without childcare, adults cannot reenter the workforce and the economic growth of the state will be compromised.

Thank you for considering support of this bill and committing dollars to sustaining Colorado's economy.

Witness Signup List

Thank you to the Committee Chairs for the opportunity to provide written testimony, today, in favor of Emergency Relief Programs for the Child Care Sector.

My name is Erika Echeverria, and I am here today as an Early Childhood Education Professional and as a SCAN Volunteer.

The first years in live are crucial for a healthy development in every child, COVID-19 is affecting the childhood of many children when they can not access to appropriate child care classrooms. I urge you to pass the Emergency Relief to help all of those business that will support children in this important developmental stage.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony. As you know, the Emergency Relief for the Child Care Sector bill will benefit many children in Colorado. That is why I urge you to vote in favor of these vital stimulus funds to help sustain the child care sector.

Sincerely,

Erika Echeverria
EHS Home Base Visitor

Witness Signup List

I am writing you today on behalf of Council for a Strong America and ReadyNation, to urge your support for HB 20B-1002 - Emergency Relief Programs for the Child Care Sector.

This bipartisan legislation would establish two programs that would provide sustainability grants to save our existing child care providers and expansion grants to help rebuild child care capacity lost as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ReadyNation is a national, bipartisan business network of current and former business leaders focused on strengthening workforce development and the economy through the promotion of smart investments in America's children and youth. Our members recognize that child care is one of the most important sectors of our economy and is even more critical during the current public health crisis, as Coloradans return to work.

A ReadyNation study released this year, *Want to Grow Colorado's Economy? Fix the Child Care Crisis*, found an annual economic cost to Colorado of \$2.2 billion in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue as a result of the infant-and toddler child care crisis, and that was pre-COVID-19.

All child care providers need to have access to financial resources to sustain their small businesses in the wake of the pandemic, and to prepare to re-open. Maintaining child care for Colorado's workforce is of the utmost importance. As our state transitions back to work, child care providers will need continued support to address reduced enrollments, enhanced health and safety protocols, train teachers, restock food and supplies, and purchase additional inventories needed to support new safety/operating standards.

Child care providers in Colorado and across the country have dealt with months of closures and loss of revenue, and they face an uncertain future. In fact, a recent survey from the National Association for the Education of Young Children shows that 40% of child care providers are certain they will close without financial assistance. Council for a Strong America and ReadyNation are working to ensure the child care market weathers this crisis. Without child care, Colorado parents cannot go back to work.

The recovery of our state depends on the stabilization of the child care industry, and we urge you to support HB 20B-1002, which will provide necessary financial support to the child care providers in Colorado and will support working parents and their children.



November 30, 2020

Dear Colorado General Assembly members,

I am reaching out to you today to ask for your help in passing legislation to create the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Grant Program for the childcare sector sponsored by Reps. Kipp and Landgraf and Sens. Pettersen and Sonnenberg. This would help fund childcare centers in Colorado, including those on higher education campuses, through sustainability grants.

The Auraria Early Learning Center (AELC), operated by the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC), faces a \$1.3M revenue shortfall from FY2019-20 budgeted revenues, approximately 50% of the budget required to operate the AELC as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

To give you some background, the AELC opened its doors in 1976 as an affordable, conveniently-located childcare option for members of the Auraria Campus community – students, faculty, and staff at the four partner institutions, including Community College of Denver (CCD), Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver), University of Colorado Denver (UC Denver), and the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC).

Today, after over four decades of service, the AELC faces a severe financial loss that could include long-term closure due to the impacts of COVID-19. Childcare is an underpinning of any society, especially one trying to recover from an economic downturn. Parents cannot effectively return to work if quality childcare is not available.

For 44 years, the AELC has served as much more than just childcare for the campus; it is the **community's early learning cornerstone**. The AELC provides enrolled families with a quality experience for their children while parents work to achieve their own professional and educational goals. For the institutions, the **AELC offers clinical practice and critical field experience for college students studying early childhood education**, as well as vital student employment, offering a flexible schedule and the ability to work and attend class without having to leave campus.

As you know, schools and learning centers across the country were forced to close in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Auraria Early Learning Center. After implementing the recommended CDC & public health safety measures and adjusting their day-to-day procedures to ensure the health and wellness of their staff and families, the AELC reopened in May to support those parents and guardians unable to work remotely or in need of guidance as their children transitioned to online learning.

Due to the impacts of COVID-19, the AELC has experienced a serious decrease in enrollment, causing significant budget shortfalls in the fiscal year 2020-21 and forcing the AELC to operate at a severe deficit. With the large-scale transition to remote work, salary reductions, and layoffs in the workforce, the demand for childcare has drastically fallen.

Despite the AELC’s efforts to adapt its 5-star rated program to ensure adherence to health and safety restrictions and protocols, low enrollment remains a significant challenge. In a typical year, the AELC can serve up to 224 students; COVID-19 capacity has dropped this threshold to 130 students, and the current enrollment reflects only 85 children. As its steward, AHEC has pulled every financial lever available to ensure that the AELC can operate effectively.

**AURARIA HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER
FY2020-21 AUXILIARY REVENUE PROJECTIONS**
(Based on Spring 21 being similar to Fall 20)

	2019-20 Budget	2020-21 Budget	Budget-to- Budget \$ Change	Budget-to- Budget % Change	2020-21 Estimate	Budget-to- Estimate \$ Change	Budget-to- Estimate % Change
Revenues:							
Early Learning Center	\$2,632,844	\$2,126,000	-\$506,844	-19.3%	\$1,295,000	-\$831,000	-39.1%
Total Estimated Revenue Loss from FY19-20 to FY20-21						-\$1,337,844	-50.8%

As mentioned earlier, without financial assistance or an increase in enrollment, the AELC is poised to face a significant revenue shortfall of over \$1.3M from FY2019-20 budgeted revenues, approximately 50% of the budget required to operate the AELC. With this projected revenue loss, the Auraria Early Learning Center, after over four decades of supporting the students, faculty, and staff of the Auraria Campus community, is at a crossroads.

After eight months, the AELC is approaching a tipping point, at which time it will no longer be sustainable. We are looking for a short-term solution to help us safely and securely navigate these challenges. Specifically, we are in need of state funding to get us through the COVID-19 financial crisis.

We ask for your support of the legislation that will be introduced today to help fund childcare centers in Colorado. In addition, we look forward to continuing our work together to solve the ongoing budget crisis we at AHEC face.

Warmest regards,

Colleen

COLLEEN A. WALKER | Chief Executive Officer

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Counties & Commissioners across Colorado working to provide a unified, nonpartisan and independent voice at the statehouse.

November 30, 2020

To the Honorable Members of the Colorado General Assembly

CCAT applauds the bipartisan legislative leadership in bringing forward a package of bills to help Coloradans most impacted by the COVID crisis.

Counties are on the front line of the pandemic response and see firsthand the extreme challenges and hardships faced by a broad range of citizens. We stand ready to partner with state leaders to ensure these much-needed resources are offered with fidelity across Colorado.

CCAT urges legislators to pass bills providing aid in the following areas:

Small Business Relief – Small, locally owned businesses are the backbone of Colorado’s economy and communities. These very industries are among the hardest hit by the pandemic causing further strain on their employees and public support programs.

Support SB 20B-001, COVID-19 Relief Small & Minority Businesses Arts Organizations.

Child Care Support – Colorado’s economic recovery depends on access to stable, high quality, and affordable childcare so citizens can continue to work during the pandemic. This critical resource is threatened as childcare providers are among the hardest hit with revenues severely strained by plummeting enrollment and increased expenses to ensure adequate safety protocols.

Support House Bill 20B-1002, Emergency Relief Programs for Child Care Sector

Housing & Direct Rental Assistance – As the economic strain of the pandemic continues, more Coloradans are increasingly vulnerable to eviction or foreclosure. Arguably the most fundamental function of government is to ensure families have a safe, warm, and habitable place to live to weather the pandemic and resulting economic crisis.

Support Senate Bill 20-002, Housing and Direct COVID Emergency Assistance.

*Ruth Aponte (303) 907-1980 raponte@aponte-busam.com
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* Denotes individual Commissioners



November 30, 2020

Dear Representative Kipp, Representative Landgraf, Senator Pettersen, and Senator Sonnenberg:

The Colorado Alliance of YMCAs is grateful for your leadership during this COVID-19 pandemic, and thankful of your support in the child care emergency relief efforts. We are in full support of this initiative, as our YMCAs worked feverishly to provide emergency childcare programs to essential workers during the stay-at-home order phase.

YMCAs in Colorado, and across the United States, are playing a critical role in our collective response to the COVID-19 crisis. When the pandemic escalated, our Ys immediately pivoted from traditional operations to transforming fitness facilities into safe spaces for emergency childcare programs. Since March, our **YMCAs have supported nearly 20,000 youth in childcare services and distance learning support.** In addition, our YMCAs throughout Colorado continue to meet the critical needs of their communities by **addressing food insecurity and distributed more than 200,000 pounds of food,** and strive to **minimize social isolation** by offering safe, physically distant activities, as well as, virtual connections by conducting nearly **25,000 phone calls to Seniors.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging time for our country, and we recognize our youth have, too, felt the stress and ambiguity during this unprecedented time. **Through safe and responsible operations across hundreds of sites and childcare programs serving from ages 6 months to middle school teens, we continue to provide a fun, safe experience to the youth in our communities, while supporting their distance learning endeavors.** The Youth Development Leaders throughout the state are committed to providing an environment in which our youth can learn, grow, and thrive while participating in their licensed childcare program.

While our programs have reached 20,000 youth across Colorado, we know there are thousands more additional youth we can serve through childcare programs and distance learning support. All of our **Y programs have utilized an excess of scholarship funds to support the families with financial challenges,** and **all YMCAs continue to advocate and campaign to support additional funding.** With the potential support of additional emergency relief funding, our YMCAs are well positioned to support the youth of all ages throughout Colorado in a safe, nurturing environment within a Y childcare program.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Dixon
Executive Director, Colorado Alliance of YMCAs
sdixon@ppymca.org

Colorado Alliance of YMCAs
The Y: We're for youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.