

Senator Jason Lewis, Chair
Joint Committee on Education
24 Beacon Street, Room 511-B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Alice Peisch, Chair
Joint Committee on Education
24 Beacon Street, Room 473G
Boston, MA 02133

July 2, 2019

RE: An Act Relative to Affordable and Accessible High Quality Early Education and Care (H.470 and S.288)

Dear Chairs Lewis and Peisch, Vice Chairs Lovely and Tucker, and Members of the Joint Committee on Education:

We, the undersigned organizations, recognize that in order to meet the needs of the 21st-century workforce and strengthen our economy in a way that also reduces racial, gender, and income inequality in our state, **Massachusetts families need affordable, accessible, high-quality early education and child care.**

While Massachusetts is a nationwide leader on quality in early education and care, the current system is unaffordable and/or inaccessible for many families.

We support, and are working together to develop the details of, a plan that would give Massachusetts families access to affordable, high-quality early education and child care delivered through programs at centers, homes and public schools.

Some ideas we are considering include the following:

- Extended hours that go beyond the traditional work day;
- A sliding-fee scale where families below a certain percentage of the poverty line would be able to access child care options without paying anything, while families with higher incomes would pay a progressive sliding-scale tuition fee based on their income, with no family paying more than a set percent of their income; and
- Ensuring that early educators are fairly compensated and properly trained to reduce turnover, secure a high-quality workforce, and attain an adequate supply of child care to meet the need.

We are a diverse set of groups including community, faith-based, labor, and business organizations, as well as early educators, parents, networks, and direct service organizations. We are working together to develop the details of a plan we can all support. In the meantime, we have filed placeholder legislation, H.470 (Representative Gordon) and S.288 (Senator Friedman), titled “An Act Relative to Affordable and Accessible High Quality Early Education and Care.”

We look forward to working with members of the Committee as we develop the details of this plan.

Sincerely,

Jesse Mermell, President
Alliance for Business Leadership

Peter Doliber, Executive Director
Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs

Boston Democratic Socialists of America

Ana Poblacion, Research Scientist
Children's HealthWatch

Deb Fastino, Executive Director
Coalition for Social Justice

Clare Higgins, Executive Director
Community Action Pioneer Valley

Kim Davenport, Managing Director, Birth to 3rd Grade Alignment
Edward Street Child Services

Chelsea Sedani, Director of Advocacy
EMPath

Naomi Meyer, Senior Attorney
Greater Boston Legal Services

Kate Barrand, President & CEO
Horizons for Homeless Children

Cindy Rowe, Executive Director
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action

Rachael Collins
Juliet Workers

Sasha Goodfriend, President
Mass NOW

William Eddy, Executive Director
Massachusetts Association of Early Education & Care (MADCA)

JD Chesloff, Executive Director
Massachusetts Business Roundtable

Jeff McLynch, Director
Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education

Jill Ashton, Executive Director
Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Lew Finfer, Co-Director
Massachusetts Communities Action Network

Michelle Haimowitz, Executive Director
Massachusetts Head Start Association

Gillian Mason, Co-Director
Massachusetts Jobs with Justice

Georgia Katsoulomitis, Executive Director
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Beth Huang, Director
Massachusetts Voter Table

Tina Sherman, Campaign Director
MomsRising

Rebecca Hart Holder, Executive Director
NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts

Lauren Birchfield Kennedy, Co-Founder
Neighborhood Villages

Denise Schultz, Director
New England Women's Policy Initiative

Maria Rosario, Executive Director
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Abhidnya Kurve, Coordinator
On Solid Ground Coalition

Imari Paris Jeffries, Executive Director
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**Planned Parenthood League of
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John Lippitt, Leadership Team Member
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Joe DiMauro, Statewide Campaign
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Chris Condon, Political Director
SEIU Local 509

Amy O'Leary, Early Education for All
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Kathy Melish, President
United Auto Workers Local 159

Anais N. Surkin, President
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Beth Chandler, President & CEO
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Gail Fortes, Executive Director
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