

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Joins colleagues in introducing legislation to combat the child care crisis, support working families

Posted on Monday, May 1, 2023

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) joined colleagues in introducing the *Child Care for Working Families Act*, comprehensive legislation to tackle the child care crisis and ensure families across America can find and afford the high-quality child care they need.

“Working families in Wisconsin face rising costs and for many families, finding affordable child care has been a major barrier to re-entering the workforce,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “Ensuring working families have access to high quality, affordable child care is a win-win: parents can get back to work to provide for their families and all our kids have the opportunity to get the strong start that they deserve.”

Across the country, too many families cannot find – or afford – the high-quality child care they need so parents can go to work and children can thrive, and the worsening child care crisis is holding families, child care workers, businesses, and our entire economy back. Over the last three decades, the cost of child care has increased by 220%, forcing families – and mothers, in particular – to make impossible choices, and more than half of all families live in child care deserts. Meanwhile, child care workers are struggling to make ends meet on the poverty-level wages they are paid and child care providers are struggling to simply stay afloat. The crisis – which was exacerbated by the pandemic – is costing our economy dearly, to the tune of \$122 billion in economic losses each year.

The *Child Care for Working Families Act* would tackle the child care crisis head-on: ensuring families can afford the child care they need, expanding access to more high-quality options, stabilizing the child care sector, and helping ensure child care workers taking care of our nation's kids are paid livable wages. This legislation will also dramatically expand access to pre-K, and support full-day, full-year Head Start Programs and increased wages for Head Start workers. Under the legislation, the typical family in America will pay no more than \$10 a day for child care – with many families paying nothing at all – and no eligible family will pay more than 7% of their income on child care.

The *Child Care for Working Families Act* will:

- **Make child care affordable for working families.**
 - The typical family earning the state median income will pay about \$10 a day for child care.
 - No working family will pay more than seven percent of their income on child care.
 - Families earning below 85% of state median income will pay nothing at all for child care.
 - If a state does not choose to receive funding under this program, the Secretary can provide funds to localities, such as cities, counties, local governments, districts, or Head Start agencies.
- **Improve the quality and supply of child care for all children and expand families' child care options by:**
 - Addressing child care deserts by providing grants to help open new child care providers in underserved communities.
 - Providing grants to cover start-up and licensing costs to help establish new providers.
 - Increasing child care options for children who receive care during non-traditional hours.
 - Supporting child care for children who are dual-language learners, children who are experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.
- **Support higher wages for child care workers.**
 - Child care workers would be paid a living wage and achieve parity with elementary school teachers who have similar credentials and experience.
 - Child care subsidies would cover the cost of providing high-quality care.
- **Dramatically expand access to high-quality pre-K.**
 - States would receive funding to establish and expand a mixed-delivery

- system of high-quality preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds.
- States must prioritize establishing and expanding universal local preschool programs within and across high-need communities.
- If a state does not choose to receive funding under this program, the Secretary can provide funds to localities, such as cities, counties, local governments, districts, or Head Start agencies.
- **Better support Head Start programs by providing the funding necessary to offer full-day, full-year programming and increasing wages for Head Start workers.**

This legislation is led by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Congressman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (D-VA-03) is also cosponsored by Senators Bob Casey (D-PA), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Chuck Schumer (D-NY), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Steve Bennet (D-CO), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Chris Coons (D-DE), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Richard Durbin (D-IL), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), John Fetterman (D-PA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Angus King (I-ME), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Ed Markey (D-MA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Jack Reed (D-RI), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Tina Smith (D-MN), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Peter Welch (D-VT), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

The legislation is endorsed by: AFL-CIO, AFSCME, AFT, All Our Kin, The Center for American Progress, The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), Child Care Aware of America, Community Change Action, Council for Professional Recognition, Family Value @ Work, First Five Years Fund, MomsRising, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), National Education Association (NEA), National Women’s Law Center (NWLC), Oxfam, Save the Children, Save the Children Action Network, SEIU, YWCA, Zero to Three, and First Five Years Fund.

A fact sheet on the legislation is available [here](#).

Bill text is available [here](#).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).