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DRAFT

Honorable Barbara Lee
U.S. Congress Member 13th District
1301 Clay Street, Suite 1000-N
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Congresswoman Lee:

The Alameda County Early Care and Education Planning Council advises and makes recommendations to policy makers to ensure that all children and families have access to quality child care that educates children and enriches their lives.

We first want to thank you for the critical leadership role you play advocating for equity and protecting our children and most vulnerable citizens.

We are writing to every member of the Congressional Delegation representing Alameda County to oppose the proposed tax cuts and support adequate funding for children's programs in the 2018 spending bill. Alameda County has over 2,000 ECE programs and 13,300 children benefiting from public subsidies. We've maximized every dollar possible, obtaining a special pilot from the state to restructure our state subsidies, and we've written child care into community development funding streams and city general plans wherever we can. However, we have thousands of children on waiting lists for care and the federal government funding is crucial to maintaining our system.

Both the House and Senate tax bills primarily provide tax cuts for large businesses and the wealthy. They are estimated to cost \$2.4 trillion over 10 years, increasing the deficit by \$1.5 trillion. The Republican Budget Resolution makes clear that passage of the tax bill will be followed by drastic cuts in programs that are integral to the well-being of children and their families, including Medicaid, SNAP, public education, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant. As it currently stands in both the Senate and the House the Bill will not help many working and low income families. Although numerous provisions are detrimental we highlight those directly related to our mission:

- Beginning in 2023 Dependent Care Assistance Plans (DCAPs) are eliminated. DCAPs allow families in in employer sponsored plans to pay for dependent care expenses with pre-tax dollars. In 2016, almost 1.4 million families benefited.
- The tax bill eliminates the tax credit for employers that offer child care benefits to their employees, effective immediately.
- The House tax plan proposes a nonrefundable \$600 increase in the Child Tax Credit (CTC). Because the increase is nonrefundable, it wouldn't help the low-income families who need the most help
- The Bill requires families with self-employment income – like family child care providers -- to substantiate that income in order to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) – which would potentially mean delays and erect barriers to those claiming refundable tax credits.

As we approach the December 8th deadline to pass a federal spending bill, we urge Congress to craft a budget deal that provides sequester relief for non-defense discretionary programs equal to that for defense and adequately funds key early childhood programs. All children and families should have access to affordable, high-quality culturally competent child care regardless of their income, where they live, their special needs, or immigration status. All children must have a safe and healthy place to learn and thrive and where all domains of their development are nurtured. We thank you again for your leadership.

Sincerely,