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August 17, 2017

Honorable Eric Swalwell  
U.S. Congress Member 15<sup>th</sup> District  
129 Cannon Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Swalwell:

We first want to thank you for your steadfast support for children's programs including early care and education. We are grateful for the critical leadership role you play. We also want to congratulate you on the birth of your son!

We are writing to every member of the Congressional Delegation representing Alameda County to offer our assessment of the current federal appropriations for early care and education.

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 childcare that educates children and enriches their lives. General membership on the Council is open to all who live or work in Alameda County. The 25 members of the Steering Committee are appointed by the County Board of Supervisors and/or County Superintendent of Schools.

As you so well know, many families in Alameda County face challenges obtaining and paying for child care. The California Resource and Referral Network estimates that a licensed child care slot is available for only 31% of children birth to 12 with parents in the labor force and that the average annual cost of full-time infant care is more than the cost of tuition at Cal State East Bay or UC Berkeley.

Access is even more challenging for low wage workers and those in poverty. Fifteen per cent of Alameda's children 0-5 lived in poverty in 2014, this meant 16,539 children had an annual family income of below \$19,700 for a family of three. According to the April 2017 Report by the National Women's Law Center, 9.6% of California's working mothers of very young children, those age 3 and under, work in low-wage occupations.

While federal, state and local funding provide invaluable support through the child care subsidy system, over 20,000 children in Alameda County between birth and four that are eligible for child care subsidies do not receive them due to insufficient funding. The unmet need in Alameda County is 8,168 children 0-2 and 2,533 children 3-4. Despite recent increases in state funding, California investments are still almost \$200 million less than before the Great Recession and we have an estimated 60,000 fewer spaces statewide.

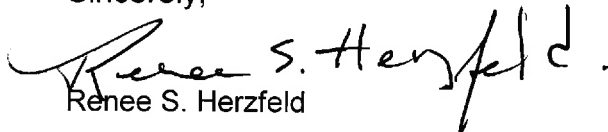
In addition, child care providers are sorely underpaid. The 2016 Alameda County Early Care and Education Workforce Study conducted by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment found the wages paid to those identified as teachers with no college degree ranged from a low of \$13.59 to a high of \$16.97 which you can imagine is untenable in a high cost County.

On July 13, the House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education subcommittee marked up their FY 2018 appropriations bill. The committee started with an allocation of \$5 billion less than the previous year, which is \$30 billion below the 2010 level after adjusting for inflation.

- The Child Care and Development Block Grant received \$2.860 billion, an increase of \$4 million. While we appreciate that the Committee did not accept the Trump recommendation to cut CCDBG, The National Women's Law Center estimates that CCDBG needs to be increased by \$1 Billion just to meet the requirements of the 2014 Reauthorization and ensure current access levels.
- Head Start received a \$22 million increase. For your background, in FY 15-16 there were 7 Head Start grantees in Alameda County serving approximately 2,197 children.
- Did not eliminate 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center resident Trump has proposed eliminating the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning after school program which would result in the loss of an estimated 400,000 spaces in California. At the same time, next year's state budget provides a \$50 million increases to our ASES program (which leverages 21<sup>st</sup> Century funds) to try to enable programs to meet the increased minimum wage laws.
- Eliminated \$16 million CCAMPIS for moms in college.
- Sustained IDEA Part B Section 619 preschool and IDEA Part C providing critical support for those children with special needs.

We ask for your support for continued and expanded funding and that you remain vigilant about protecting the access of immigrant families to services. We are happy to provide additional background to you and your staff as you make decisions on these essential programs.

Sincerely,

  
Renee S. Herzfeld