



April 4, 2017

The Honorable Jerry Brown
Governor of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

A promise made is a promise kept.

This is an adage we instill in our children from an early age. When one makes a promise, it should be done with the intention of following through. We urge you to continue the promises you made to California's families.

The Legislative Women's Caucus has once again continued its promise to child care growth in the budget. This commitment has come from the Women's Caucus for more than a decade- a decade that has seen drastic, long-lasting cuts to a system that has been chronically underfunded and underappreciated.

While you have proposed a "pause" to past budget promises, California working families continue to work and need services. Even with the gains we have recently made, we are still lagging behind the needs identified more than a decade ago. Currently, it is estimated that six out of seven children eligible for subsidized child care in California did not receive services from state programs, and the estimated number of children eligible for subsidized child care is 1,479,000.^[1] The state of California served 218,000 children in subsidized child care last year. You cannot "pause" the reality of an 85 percent unmet need for California families. Parents need childcare NOW.

Last year, we chose to address change with a long-term approach. An approach that was supported by leadership in both the Assembly and Senate, and to a degree supported with your signature on the final budget. It is this approach that allows the early care and education system to see incremental changes. These changes that will positively impact the predominantly female workforce that delivers care to our children; the families who can remain working; and for the children who benefit now. They are California's future workforce.

^[1] <http://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/1-2-million-california-children-eligible-subsidized-child-care-not-receive-services-state-programs-2015/>

Specifically, we need to honor the promise to increase provider rates to reflect the current cost of doing business in California, while ensuring there are enough slots. This is not a choice between one or the other. California is a diverse state with diverse child care needs. We must move forward with both provider rates AND child care slots. Raising rates across the child care delivery system allows parents to use the care that best serves their families and allows the child care workforce to earn a wage that allows them to remain slightly above poverty. Your "pause" as proposed in the Governor's 2017-18 State Budget, not only breaks a promise, but dismantles the pragmatic, long-term approach agreed upon by refusing delivery to child care workers and creating roadblocks for California families.

Modern families are unique. Two parent homes are often two-income homes. In order for these parents to provide for their families, they must have adequate access to child care and early education. When parents cannot find or afford child care, the economy loses valued workers and children miss opportunities to learn and the achievement gap begins.

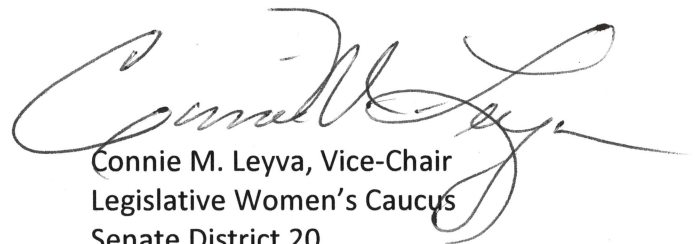
You have referenced the achievement gap and impacts on education within communities of color. Closing the achievement gap begins with an early care and education investment at birth. By honoring our past work and confronting the reality that California's child care system still struggles to serve sufficient numbers of eligible children, we can begin to adequately keep our promise to close the achievement gap.

We strongly urge you to develop a plan in your May Budget Revision that will ensure more eligible parents have access to reliable care for their children, while maintaining promises made to providers who care for working families in California.

Sincerely,



Cristina Garcia, Chair
Legislative Women's Caucus
Assembly District 58



Connie M. Leyva, Vice-Chair
Legislative Women's Caucus
Senate District 20