



ARCO IRIS

BILINGUAL CHILDREN'S CENTER

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Testimony Concerning Support for SB 881

Submitted to the Senate Committee on Budget and Tax

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Thanks to your leadership from one year ago, legislation to create hiring bonuses was approved and became law. This was an important step toward solving early childhood educator compensation. However, we would like to share with you our confusion and concerns that these dollars have not moved to the child care provider community after all this time.

We urge your support for SB 881, which is a continuation of the bill you approved last year. That bill had an end date, and the agency needs more time. Unfortunately, the child care workforce does not have the

luxury of time. We are struggling with critical workforce shortages. These bonuses and support are important for child care centers and the family child care community right now to incentivize, recruit, retain, and train new people to do this crucial work. Parents are counting on it. Early childhood educators are counting on it. Even though we haven't received the bonus money yet, this gave a ray of hope to our current staff that change is coming.

With inflation before us, my teachers are struggling with everyday household decisions. For example, I have a teacher who has told me that she has to make difficult decisions regarding what to purchase at the grocery store. She asks herself, "Am I able to buy eggs or not?" Why does the workforce which takes care of our children need to struggle to make these otherwise simple decisions?

We need every penny to invest, support and incentivize this essential field. **We urge your support for legislation.** Thank you for your leadership for our community.

Carolina Reyes