

March 14, 2023

Testimony Concerning Support for SB 881

Submitted to the Senate Committee on Budget and Tax

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Thanks to your leadership one year ago, legislation to create hiring bonuses was approved and became law. This was an important step toward solving early childhood educator compensation. We hope you share our confusion and concern that these dollars have not moved to the childcare 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 childcare workforce does not have the luxury of time. We are struggling with critical workforce shortages. These bonuses and support are important for childcare centers and family child care 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. I have two employees and this legislation will help with keeping my employees and helping with important ongoing training.

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.