

May 14, 2014

Edmund "Jerry" G. Brown, Jr., Governor
State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

The California Legislative Women's Caucus has prioritized achieving a coherent early care and education policy (ECE) that universally addresses the needs of California's children age 0 to 5. It is well documented that access to quality and state supported ECE contributes to children's well-being, brain development and school readiness; begins to address the achievement gap evidenced in later school as well as the opportunity gap that often determines lifelong success; fights poverty by allowing low-income parents to work and participate in education and training; and provides employment and small business opportunities for instructors and providers.

As a start in achieving this goal, the California Legislative Women's Caucus calls for the 2014/15 budget the Legislature adopts and puts on the Governor's desk to contain the funding necessary to achieve the childcare, state preschool and kindergarten outcomes outlined below.

In funding ECE, specifically childcare, we are asking to strengthen access to slots and to modernize rates. The California Legislative Women's Caucus wants to see 40,000 of the 100,000 lost slots across current programs and age groups funded. We want to emphasize family-friendly programs, supporting parents who need full-time care and those who work varied schedules. We estimate this cost to be approximately \$300 million. We also want to ensure that state supported childcare has quality standards and associated workforce training and thus want to invest \$25 million in quality improvement, resource and referral, ECE provider education and training, parent education, and restoring the Centralized Eligibility List.

Provider rates for voucher based programs are based on a 2005 Market Rate survey. Rates for our state contracts have been frozen since 2007. The California Legislative Women's Caucus strongly advocates modernizing providers' reimbursement rates by approximately \$300 million as an initial augmentation. It is also crucial that we review and streamline the rate structure, program administration and eligibility.

The California Legislative Women's Caucus asks that the 2014/15 budget also contain funding to expand availability and accessibility to State preschool by increasing the number of slots to cover children of families with incomes at 250% of federal poverty level and extending wrap around services so that State preschool provides a full day experience, thus eliminating a key barrier to family participation.

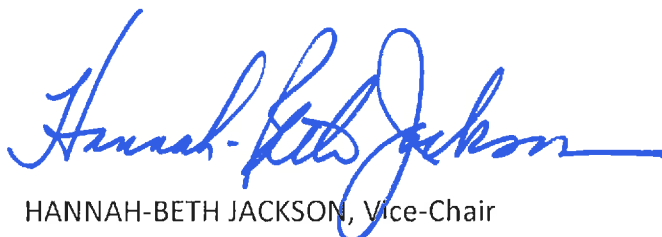
For the California Legislative Women's Caucus, the next component necessary to prioritize ECE investment is to begin to appropriate the funding necessary to move to full day and mandatory kindergarten. Finally within the 2014/15 budget we also want to ensure that services for children with disabilities are fully funded.

We believe these childcare, preschool and kindergarten enhancements are important first steps to begin achieving the goal of a coherent, universal ECE program. Only an effective ECE system working in coordination with the restructured k-12 investment formulas can effectively address our State's existing achievement and opportunity gaps. As the Governor said in his State of the State speech in 2013, "nothing is more determinative of our future than how we teach our children." In future years we will continue to advocate for strategic investments to expand access and ensure a quality ECE system for all of California's children 0-5.

On behalf of the California Legislative Women's Caucus, we respectfully request the ECE investments outlined to be included in the 2014/15 budget and prioritized in your negotiations with the Governor in order to strengthen California's ECE system, improve quality, expand access for children and families and support the women dominated early education and care workforce.



BONNIE LOWENTHAL, Chair
Legislative Women's Caucus
Assembly 70th District



HANNAH-BETH JACKSON, Vice-Chair
Legislative Women's Caucus
Senate 19th District

cc: Senate President pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg
Assembly Speaker Toni G. Atkins
Nancy Skinner, Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
Mark Leno, Chair, Senate Budget Committee
Members, CA Legislative Women's Caucus