

CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: Laura Friedman OFFICE RUNNING FOR: Assemblymember, 43rd District (incumbent)

COUNTIES REPRESENTED: Los Angeles

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1. What actions will you take to support an increase of access to child care and early learning for children beginning at birth for working families?

Throughout my time in the legislature, I have supported legislation and budget actions to increase access to child care for working families. I’ve coauthored and supported numerous bills to strengthen early learning and our child care network, including:
2017-18 Session
AB 123 (McCarty) – Support for California’s subsidized early learning providers
AB 125 (McCarty) – Reimbursement rate modernization
AB 378 (Limon & Gonzalez) – Right for providers to organize and collectively bargain for better rates and wages
AB 1754 (McCarty) – Eligibility for full day California State Preschool Program for Medi-Cal children

2019-20 Session
AB 167 (B. Rubio) – California Partnership for Infants and Toddlers Act
AB 194 (Reyes) – Increased access to subsidized child care
AB 324 (Aguiar-Curry) – Professional development for child care providers

In addition, as a member of the Legislative Women’s Caucus, I’ve successfully pushed for increased funding for child care, as well as increased compensation and training opportunities for child care providers.

Looking forward to 2021, I stand ready to help child care providers through California’s economic recovery and our ongoing struggles with COVID-19 by preserving funding and ensuring that providers have the tools and equipment that they need to keep their doors open and their employees and the children that they serve safe.

2. What actions will you take to reduce multigenerational poverty and support greater success outcomes for children?

Since taking office in 2016, I’ve worked to help California’s foster youth access safe and sustainable housing as they transition to adulthood. Although transition-age foster youth are eligible for the Extended Foster Care program, including housing services, over one third report being homeless. I’ve authored several bills to bridge the housing gap for transition-age foster youth – ensuring that they have access to appropriate and safe housing – whether they choose a college dorm, their own apartment, or to remain with their foster family. I’ve also worked to streamline the bureaucracy at the county level to keep young adults housed and help break the cycle of poverty.

In addition to my own bills, I’ve supported legislation and budget items to expand the number of subsidized child care slots available and increase provider rates, expand the Earned Income Tax Credit, increase access to CalFresh, expand eligibility to Medi-Cal, and coauthored measures to provide tuition-free community college for two years.

3. Do you support parents having the choice to choose the best family child care provider or center that best meets their needs?
Yes

4. Do you view child care and early learning the same why as you view K-12?
Yes. Child care and early learning form the foundation for a student’s success in K-12 and beyond.

5. What actions will you take to reduce racial disparities and ensure strong health, education, and economic outcomes for all?

Protecting underserved communities is a top priority for me. Over the past four years, I’ve worked to expand access to quality, affordable health care for all, increase funding for critical social services, increase access to affordable housing, and reduce racial disparities in education, health care, and communities.

As Chair of the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources, I’ve supported bills to boost environmental justice. My committee has worked to pass measures to ensure access to clean drinking water, reduce pollution, and clean up toxins that disproportionately impact communities of color. Moving into 2021, I will continue to fight for a cleaner California for all communities through my work as the Chair.

Finally, expanding access to affordable, quality child care is key to addressing racial disparities in health, education, and overall economic security. In 2019, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education released a report that outlined the challenges facing California’s families, and the recommendations to reduce disparities across a number of areas. From increasing the number of subsidized child care slots available, to opportunities for professional development and even better coordination across programs, the report can serve as a guide for all legislators as we work to reduce disparities.

Without a doubt, 2020 has been incredibly challenging for child care providers. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic devastation for families and businesses alike will continue to shape our work in Sacramento in 2021. After years of solid revenue and increasing funding for vital programs, the budget picture will be much different. Instead of expanding critical programs we’ll be working to shield those programs from devastating cuts. The work that we do through the budget will have a significant impact on underserved communities.

6. Do you have any thoughts on how to build up the child care and early learning workforce with meaningful compensation and value for their contributions?

Boosting our child care and early learning workforce will take a meaningful investment of funding. Our goal should be to ensure that providers can earn a living wage and access the professional development resources that they need to build careers.

I would like to explore opportunities to offer student loan forgiveness for providers and paid professional development to support and retain our child care and early learning workforce.

7. Do you believe that meeting the child care needs of California is dependent solely on the state, the private sector or a combination of both?

I believe that California needs a combination of state and private sector support for child care in order to keep Californians working and children learning.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE: