



April 17, 2023

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Toni Atkins
Senate Speaker pro Tempore
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Nancy Skinner, Chair
Senate Committee on Budget
1020 N Street, Room 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Anthony Rendon
Assembly Speaker
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Phil Ting, Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Legislative Women's Caucus 2023-24 Budget Request

Dear Governor Newsom, Speaker Rendon, Senate pro Tempore Atkins, & Budget Chairs:

Women are involved in all parts of society, but some issues affect women more than others, from the lack of access to child care to the absence of professional development opportunities. The Legislative Women's Caucus' (LWC) budget priorities for the 2023-24 budget year continue to focus on early care and education and workforce equity. Specifically, for early care and education, the LWC prioritizes increasing child care provider rates, retaining the waiving of family fees, maintaining the hold harmless policy that bases provider reimbursements on enrollment, and changing income eligibility for subsidized child care services. Our additional budget priorities are to retain funding for the Department of Industrial Relations' Women in the Trades Unit and the CA Commission on the Status of Women and Girls.

It is widely accepted that child care is a critical need that not only supports mothers and parents' ability to work but is also essential to healthy child development. Yet child care providers, who are predominantly women and women of color, remain underpaid and undervalued and low- and middle-income families continue to struggle with securing needed child care.

Our budget request is structured to address the underpayment of this essential workforce and to ensure that all families have access to needed child care. The funds requested are necessary to pave the way for a strong economic recovery for California and a more equitable future for women, children, and families. To achieve this goal, we request the following:

- Permanently raise the child care rates to reflect the amount needed, as identified by the comprehensive studies authorized by the state for immediate relief and increased stability, and adopt an alternative methodology using a cost-estimation

model and include a timeline for implementation for the actual cost of care, based on program enrollment without charging families fees;

- Continue to waive family fees;
- Allocate 20,000 child care spaces scheduled to be released in 2023-24. Families need access to child care today, and waiting for the allocation of funds only delays enrollment of new families;
- Change income eligibility for subsidized child care services to provide eligibility for families in higher cost areas and expand the capacity of resource and referral networks to ensure that families have access to information about available child care slots.

Additionally, the LWC was very proud of the \$15 million in ongoing funds secured in last year's budget to establish a Women in the Trades Office at the CA Department of Industrial Relations. We were disappointed to see this program proposed for delay in the administration's January Budget Proposal. With implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) already beginning, now is not the time to close the door to women growing a prosperous trades workforce.

Finally, the Caucus was proud to partner with legislative budget leaders and the Governor in achieving last year's powerful reproductive justice legislative victories. With new nationally relevant court cases and changing dynamics in federal policy, we know this year's agenda will be just as important to win. We are proud to partner again with the CA Future of Abortion Council on a full package of bills, and while we have not yet estimated the specific amount of funding needed for the package, we know that implementation of these bills will require additional budget investments, and are asking that your offices work with us to secure what is needed.

We thank you in advance for your consideration and, as always, for your leadership and partnership.

Sincerely,



Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Vice Chair
Legislative Women's Caucus
Assemblymember, 4th District

cc: Members of the Legislative Women's Caucus
Jennifer Siebel Newsom, California's First Partner