THE CHILD CARE FOR WORKING FAMILIES ACT

On Feb. 26, 2019, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Congressman Bobby Scott (D-VA) reintroduced the “Child Care for Working Families Act of 2019.” (HR 1364/S 568)

Child care plays an important role in the U.S. economy, helping to generate 15 million jobs and more than $500 billion in income annually. Families need child care so they can work, and children need a safe place where they can learn and continue their healthy development. Unfortunately, there are far too many families who earn low incomes that do not have access to affordable and high-quality child care. Over the past decade, the cost of child care has spiked, which has forced families to make difficult decisions about investing in care or leaving the workforce. On average, millions of working families pay more for child care than they would for housing, transportation needs, or food every month.

The Child Care for Working Families Act would help ensure access to high-quality, affordable child care for millions of families, and would greatly expand assistance at the federal level by:

• Creating a federal-state child care partnership for children from birth through age 13.

• More than doubling the number of children eligible for assistance under the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and ensuring these children gain access to high-quality early learning programs.

• Helping states create universal preschool programs for 3 and 4-year-olds during the school day, and providing a higher matching rate for infants and toddlers.

• Supporting the child care workforce through increased training and compensation to ensure they are paid a living wage.

• Establishing provider payment levels that reflect higher wages and provide investment for scholarships to grow the workforce.

• Improving the quality of care in home-based, family, and neighbor settings and during nonstandard working hours to better support families.

• Offering training and professional development opportunities to providers for nutrition and physical activity, age-appropriate exposure to screen media and integration, utilization of instructional methods to assist learning across disciplines (literacy, arts, science, etc), and more

• Addressing the functional and access needs of children with disabilities (including infants and toddlers) in child care settings by increasing funding under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

• Helping Head Start provide full-day, full-year programming.

Under this bill, households that do not exceed 150 percent of a state median income (the percentage is gradually reduced over the next several years) are eligible for help, and the copayment would be no more than 7 percent of a family's income.

To date, there are more than 115 cosponsors to this legislation in the House, and 34 in the Senate.

CONGRESSIONAL STAFF CONTACTS

• Congressman Bobby Scott (D-VA): Paula Daneri, Education Policy Fellow, (202) 225-3725, Paula.Daneri@mail.house.gov

• Senator Patty Murray (D-WA): Kara Marchione, Education Policy Director, (202) 224-0767, Kara_Marchione@help.senate.gov