

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ZACK FIELDS

Fairview • South Addition • Government Hill • Downtown • Eastridge

Sponsor Statement: HB 149

Child care is a critical sector in the American economy. It is key to social and emotional learning for children and helps parents work and continue their own education. Yet this sector suffers from poor worker pay, high costs for parents, chronic issues regarding access, and high demand for quality. The result is high turnover, chronic stress, and a consistent shortage of workers.

Nationwide, up to 53% of child care workers are on some sort of public assistance. 25-30% do not have health insurance. By allowing child care providers to organize and collectively bargain, Alaska can better support high quality child care, address chronic issues such as the gender pay gap, and increase worker job satisfaction, child safety, and opportunity for workers. Collective bargaining has been shown to provide higher quality child care through more training, advocacy and education opportunities for workers and providers. It is a way to invest in a workforce that will be better able to recruit, retain and strengthen workers for a lifetime career. These workers will then in turn be better prepared to care for future generations of Alaskans.