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Senator Lesil McGuire

SB 129 "Child Care Centers in State Office Buildings"

Alaska is experiencing a severe lack of affordable child care. Our parents are unable to enter the workforce and our employers are unable to recruit and retain workers. Child care providers are overworked and underpaid, unable to lower their rates and continue providing service. Organizations across the state, from social service organizations to economic development organizations, are joining together to work on this very important issue. It is time we joined that effort. We must reaffirm our commitment to children and families.

Senate Bill 129 would allow child care centers to be located in office buildings owned or leased by the State of Alaska. Agencies interested in on-site child care facilities would work with the Department of Administration to determine need and feasibility. This bill provides important benefits to the State as an employer, employees and their children, and child care providers.

As an employer, the State will greatly benefit from the passage of this bill. Two decades of research shows that addressing the tension between work and life can improve recruitment and retention, reduce absenteeism and tardiness, and increase job satisfaction and loyalty. With recruitment and retention of employees being major concerns in today's economy, this bill will help to attract more prospective employees to the State. On-site child care will not only provide an important benefit to employees, resulting in fewer turnovers, it will also provide a higher quality of care for our children.

The time has come to provide the State, employees, and children with the resources necessary to succeed. I greatly appreciate your support of Senate Bill 129.