

April 20, 2021

To: Alaska House Labor and Commerce Committee

Regarding: House Bill 149

Dear Representative Fields and members of the committee,

This letter is in support of Alaska House Bill 149, to allow child care workers to collectively bargain for better wages and benefits. We see this bill as a foundational step toward elevating the essential nature of the work child care professionals do every day. Giving child care workers a strong voice to advocate for fair treatment and livable wages will in turn enable them to better support children and families.

The pandemic has highlighted how vital child care workers are to keeping the entire economy running. Child care providers have continued to work throughout the pandemic, earning some of the lowest wages in the state while also not having sick and vacation days or health insurance. If we continue with the status quo and child care work becomes economically untenable, the entire system could grind to a halt.

Collective bargaining is a fundamental right that has not historically been provided to child care workers. With passage of HB149, Alaska can capitalize on growing federal support and join 11 other states to make meaningful changes to this critical employment sector.

Respectfully,

Colleen Brody
Board Chair
SEAAEYC

From: [Rep. Zack Fields](#)
To: [Megan Holland](#)
Cc: [Tristan Walsh](#)
Subject: Fwd: HB 149
Date: Wednesday, April 28, 2021 8:58:11 AM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Tracy Breimo <[REDACTED]>
Date: April 27, 2021 at 7:31:44 PM AKDT
To: "Rep. Zack Fields" <Rep.Zack.Fields@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB 149

Thank you for reaching out concerning HB 149 . I have worked in early education for almost 40 years and have always been fortunate to work for nonprofit organizations who paid well and took very good care of their employees. I am very passionate about good quality care and positive health and well-being for children and their families. I would love to see a bill passed which could provide employee's a living wage without putting an extra burden on families who make too much money to qualify for childcare assistance but not enough money to pay the large tuition for quality childcare services. Thank you for your work and support for Alaskan families and early education. Kind regards.

Sincerely,

Tracy Breimo

Blue Shabler

Juneau AK 99801

To: Alaska House Labor and Commerce Committee Members

RE: House Bill 149

Dear Representative Fields and members of the committee,

This letter is in support of Alaska House Bill 149, to allow child care workers to collectively bargain with the state for better working conditions.

As the previous owner of Discovery Preschool, I spent a decade hiring, training, and educating incredibly talented child care teachers but was rarely able to retain them due to low wages and lack of benefits. Inevitably, my most talented employees would leave for better paying jobs in the school district or Head Start programs.

Current market conditions do not allow child care businesses to pay a livable wage or offer benefits to employees. With huge federal investments coming to our state to help fix the fractured child care system, it is critical to give the experts working within that system a voice in how those dollars are spent. We recognized child care workers as essential during the pandemic. This bill is an opportunity to elevate the essential nature of their work by providing a pathway to a livable wage.

Thank you all for working on this bill. After 24 years in the field, it is exciting to see lawmakers work to recognize how critical child care teachers are to children, families, and our economy.

Sincerely,

Blue Shabler