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**From:** Camie Gillen <>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 10, 2023 9:57 AM  
**To:** House Labor and Commerce  
**Cc:** Rep. Zack Fields  
**Subject:** HB 46 Public Testimony

Good morning,

I'm writing today as a parent in Petersburg, whose children are receiving care at the Petersburg Children's Center. In our nearly 5 years of care we have received, I can tell you that there is no harder job than being in early education and childcare. Being in childcare, they are having to be open and dependable throughout the year. Throughout sickness, through short staffing, through heartaches, pandemics, and all weather storms that come in. Childcare and early education is often no thought of or respected as well as other educations such as Elementary School. Yet, learning and development is more than crucial before the age of 3. This center is a Non-Profit that fights every month to stay open, to keep staff, and maintain quality safe care for kids and families. Their staff is underpaid, and under valued. They need more support from the State to keep going.

These teachers are spending more hours in a day with my children than I do. They are role models, they are teachers, they are family. They help my kids when they are sad, they encourage them and push them when things get hard, and they are ALWAYS encouraging fun and creative activities. Keeping staff is hard because the pay is not even a livable wage. There are no benefits such as health insurance or retirement. The cost of childcare is hard on working families anyway, let alone if you are a childcare worker yourself and barely getting by.

The working conditions take a toll. These teachers are constantly exposed to illness and germs. They change diapers, they are constantly trying to clean, they are having to manage more in 1 minute than I can imagine. They are holding anywhere from 1-20 kids lives in their hands at all times. They are teaching and helping kids develop skills, they are keeping them safe, all while making less money than most people could imagine. The cost of groceries here in our town, are rising, the fuel prices, the cost to leave for any reason such as medical, everything has gone up. It's making it very difficult to live here, and for staff of the Petersburg Children's Center, even more difficult to stay working there. If we can't find a way to hire more staff, and retain them, our community will suffer, the center would close. We need to be valuing early child development and childcare facilities. Thank you for your time and investment to help support childcare in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Camie Gillen

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, February 3, 2023 9:07 AM  
**To:** Rep. Zack Fields  
**Subject:** Defined Benefits Legislation Advances; Testify on Child Care Legislation

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Representative Fields,

I am very much in favor of HB 46, your bill to strengthen the child care sector. Because our lack of child care has been identified in our economic forecast as one of the several primary reasons for Alaska's outmigration over the last decade, it makes absolute sense to strengthen our resources for this. It needs to be part of our overall plan to grow our economy and shift it to the vibrant feature in Alaska that it once was when I moved here nearly 50 years ago and have raised my family in and will hopefully keep Alaskans here instead of leaving our state. Thank you for forwarding my favorable vote for HB 46 to the Labor and Commerce committee.

Take care and regards,  
Constance (Connie) Markis  
Anchorage

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

February 3, 2023

Chairman Jesse Sumner and Members of the House Labor and Commerce Committee,

Please support HB 46 to strengthen the childcare sector. Passing this legislation will have widespread benefits for Alaska's labor force and economy as well as for children and their families.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Respectfully,  
Janet McCabe, Anchorage Alaska

Sharlay Mamoe

Dear Representatives of the Labor and Commerce Committee,

My name is Sharlay Mamoe. I am the executive director of the Petersburg Children's Center; however, I am here testifying for my own behalf. I am in support of HB 46 as I feel that childcare employees are not making nearly enough money for the work they put into their children they care for every day. I have been associated with the early childcare industry since 2015 when I came back to Alaska with my family for work and she was in care; I became the president of the board of directors at that time. During my years as a board member, I wanted the compensation for my daughter's caregivers to be higher as their work is so important.

In 2018 I had decided to make a career change and then became the executive director of the Petersburg Children's Center. I have since been working hard to ensure that my staff know just how important their work is to the lives of the children and families we work with. I truly believe that our career is super important; it is only second to the work of a parent in the child's life, the research of high-quality childcare and preschool is there. Since I have been at Petersburg Children's Center, I have had turnover just as everyone else has, and almost EVERY time the reasoning for the staff member leaving was the wage. They cannot make a living to care for their family with the wages we are offering.

When I was at a conference here in Alaska last year, I was talking to childcare staff that worked at a subsidized facility, the assistant teacher, presumably the lowest paid staff member of the facility, made more money than I had being the highest person paid at my facility. In a different industry all together, fish processing, one company is paying a wage that is very close to my hourly rate for general processors.

I believe I am right where I need to be in life. I love my career choice; I love the children I care for; however I am very tired of watching them cry when their caregiver leaves. I recently had a previous caregiver tell me that she now works at a cargo shipping company delivering packages to its customers and she has never seen a person happier about their package being delivered. They were happier and more polite to her when she was delivering her package than they were when she was caring for their children, that is not okay.