

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.