



March 1, 2019

To: Michigan's Congressional Delegation Members

From: Camp Fire West Michigan 4C  
Center for Civil Justice  
Early On Michigan Foundation  
Flint Early Childhood Collaborative  
HighScope Educational Research Foundation  
Hope Starts Here Imperative #2 - IMPACT Detroit  
Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children  
Michigan Department of Education, Office of Great Start  
Michigan League for Public Policy  
Michigan's Children  
National Association of Social Workers- Michigan Chapter  
Starfish Family Services  
United Way of Lapeer County  
Jill Bostic, Retired Teacher of Early Childhood, Monroe and Romeo Community Schools

Child care is a necessity for any working family, yet many families are unable to access affordable, quality child care. In Michigan, 67% of young children have both parents in the workforce, but the cost of quality child care is cost-prohibitive for most families. The Michigan United Way ALICE Report estimates that a two-parent household with two children would need to earn over \$61,000 a year to both afford child care and provide for the family's other basic needs. While Michigan provides some support to help the lowest-income working families afford child care, low payment rates place significant strain on the budgets of providers - in Michigan, nearly 100 child care providers close their doors each month, causing a critical child care shortage for families in communities statewide where already 44% of our children under 5 live in a "child care desert".

The increase in funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) for FY 2018 and FY 2019 has already greatly benefited children and families in Michigan. Our state legislature has utilized increased CCDBG revenues to bring our payment structure for child care providers in line with market standards by changing payment from an hourly to a bi-weekly rate, increase overall reimbursement rates to providers, increase family income eligibility for child care assistance from 125% FPL to 130%, and provide TEACH scholarships for child care providers to increase their quality star rating. All of these constitute important positive steps, yet they fall short of meeting the significant child care burden faced by working families in our state.

Michigan relies on federal funds for supporting child care access more than most other states in the country, which means you are extremely well-positioned to drive resources to meet this critical need. We urge you to:

1. Build on the recent progress and address continuing gaps by prioritizing increasing CCDBG funding by an additional \$5 billion in the FY 2020 appropriations bill.
2. Prioritize raising the budgetary caps on non-defense discretionary spending with proportional increases for domestic programs to enable necessary increases in CCDBG without coming at the expense of other crucial supports for families and children.

Increasing funding for CCDBG would enable more Michigan families to access affordable, quality child care, enabling more parents to earn a living for their families throughout the state. We look forward to working with you to advance this investment in child care that is so important to the success of our children, our families, and our country.