



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CHILD CARE AWARE OF WASHINGTON SUPPORTS THE CHILD CARE FOR WORKING FAMILIES ACT**

TACOMA, WA – Oct. 9, 2017 – Child Care Aware of Washington strongly supports the Child Care for Working Families Act. This important legislation would dramatically improve the lives of millions of families across the United States by making high-quality child care and early learning programs more affordable and more accessible for all.

Introduced by Senator Patty Murray, D-WA and Representative Bobby Scott, D-VA, the Child Care for Working Families Act (CCWFA), aims to ensure that no family earning less than 150% of the state median income pays more than 7% of their income on child care. Families would pay their share of costs based on a sliding scale. The bill also would increase the quality of, and the compensation for, child care and early learning professionals, who for years have helped to subsidize the child care system via their very low wages.

“Our child care and early learning system is in crisis. Washington State is one of the least affordable states for child care, with infant care costing more than the average cost of in-state college tuition. Yet, child care professionals are among the lowest paid. The current system is unsustainable. The Child Care for Working Families Act is a sensible solution that would benefit everyone – young children, families, providers, communities and our economy,” said Robin Lester, chief executive officer of Child Care Aware of Washington. Approximately 60% of WA’s children under age six reside in homes where all adults work<sup>1</sup>, making child care a major expense for most of WA’s young families. For single parents the burden is greatest. Child care for an

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infant in a center consumes 50.3% of the state median income for a single mother in WA.<sup>2</sup> Currently, WA ranks as the 3rd least affordable state in the nation for care of an infant in a family child care home and 6th least affordable for care of an infant in a center.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, years of extremely low state child care assistance reimbursement rates combined with WA's recent minimum wage increase have left many child care programs struggling to stay open. Child care is already difficult to find in some rural areas of our state, and many providers have long wait lists. Additional child care closures will shrink capacity, reduce parent choice and make it difficult for some parents to remain in, or join, the workforce.

"WA's licensed child care small businesses provide an essential service and are vital to our state's economy. They ensure that parents can work and support their families, while providing employers with a reliable workforce. Child care also provides essential early learning programs to thousands of young children each year, laying a strong foundation for their success in kindergarten and beyond," Lester said.

On behalf of the thousands of families and child care businesses we serve, Child Care Aware of WA would like to offer our sincere gratitude to Sen. Murray and Rep. Scott for this critical and timely piece of legislation. Child Care Aware of Washington is a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to connecting families to local, high-quality, licensed child care and early learning programs, and to supporting providers who deliver high-quality care. As a statewide network of six regional agencies, we work side-by-side with child care providers, offering professional development services and higher education scholarships to help them integrate research-based, best practices into their programs. We are committed to ensuring that each and every child in Washington has access to the quality care and education they need to succeed in school and life. For more information, please visit our website at <http://wa.childcareaware.org> and follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Child-Care-Aware-of-Washington-149636987661/> and on Twitter @childcarewa.

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1. Child Care Aware of Washington [2017 Child Care Data Reports](#)
2. Child Care Aware of America report: [Parents and the High Cost of Child Care 2016](#)