



new hampshire
WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

To: Chairman Bradley and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee
Re: Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 446, "The Workforce Behind the Workforce Act"
Date: January 27, 2022
Position: OUGHT TO PASS

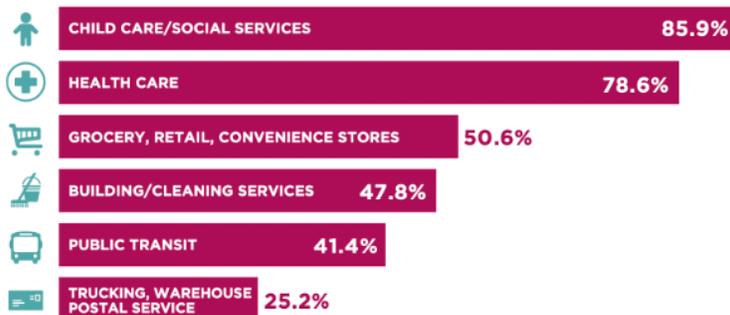
The New Hampshire Women's Foundation invests in equality and opportunity for New Hampshire women and girls through grantmaking, research, education, and advocacy.

The New Hampshire Women's Foundation submits this written testimony in support of SB 446 and respectfully requests that the Committee recommend this bill Ought to Pass. **Women are the most impacted by the child care industry – both as the providers and as those who rely on its service.**

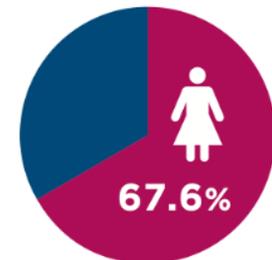
Women Comprise Majority of Essential Workforce Including Child Care Industry

New Hampshire women work in greater numbers in essential workforce occupations (child care, social services, health care, teaching, and grocery), including 86% of the employees in the child care/social service industry.¹ These jobs require women to work in person at their places of work in the community, not remotely or at home, and require access to child care in order to keep these industries functioning.

WOMEN AS PERCENTAGE OF ESSENTIAL WORKFORCE IN KEY OCCUPATIONAL SECTORS IN NH⁴



Source: Center for Economic and Policy Research Analyzing ACS 2014-2018



WOMEN COMPRISE MORE THAN 2/3 OF THE ESSENTIAL WORKFORCE

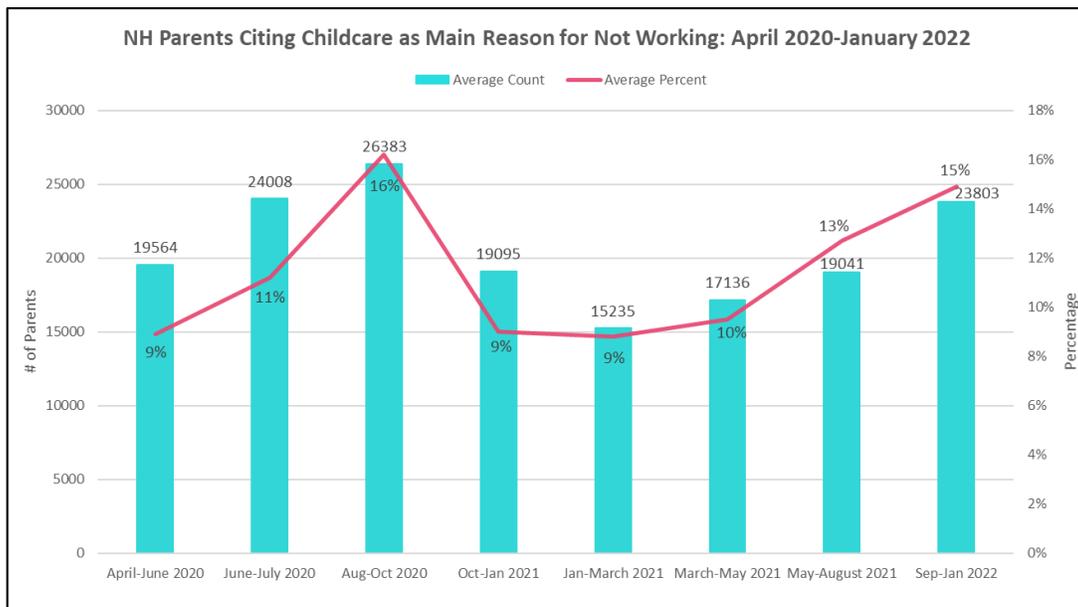
Women Reduce Hours Or Exit the Workforce Without Access to Child Care

Studies have shown that, in response to COVID-19-related child care demands, mothers with young children have arranged reductions in their work hours that are four to five times greater than the reductions arranged by fathers.² And without access to reliable child care, women leave

¹ Center for Economic and Policy Research Analyzing ACS 2014-2018

² Caitlyn Collins and others, "COVID-19 and the gender gap in work hours," *Gender, Work and Organization* (2020): 1–12, available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/gwao.12506>.

the work-force. Women made up 53% of NH unemployment claims during the pandemic.³ Between April 2020 and December 2021, 15% of Granite State workers who are out of the labor force cite child care as the primary reason for not working.⁴ For women to re-enter the work-force and sustain employment, child care centers need to be able to offer consistent care without lapse in availability. This requires adequate staffing at child care centers which requires adequate pay to child care workers.



Conclusion

Women are both the backbone of the child care industry and the backbone of the essential workers who rely on access to reliable and consistent child care. SB446 provides bonuses to child care workers that increase the likelihood that they can make ends meet and provide for their own families. In turn, this stabilized child care workforce allows women to stay on the job in other industries and support their families.

The workforce behind the workforce is female and this bill supports the Granite State women who keep this state running. We respectfully ask for your support of SB 446.

³ BLS Unemployment Insurance Data, ETA 203, Characteristics of the Uninsured.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, Week 1-41.