



new hampshire
WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

To: Chairman Gray and members of the Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 221, enabling municipalities to adopt a property tax exemption for child day care agencies.

Date: March 7, 2023

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.

We support SB 221 because it would provide relief to child care providers, to women who need child care and to local leaders who are looking for opportunities to respond to this crisis. New Hampshire is facing a child care crisis, and this bill puts a practical solution in the hands of local leaders looking stabilize or increase options for their residents and local economies.

Enabling Opt-In Legislation Supports Local Solutions

SB 221 enables towns that are interested to opt in to a program to refund property taxes to child care providers in the municipality. Municipalities can determine for themselves, with local input, whether this makes sense for their budget, their residents and their local economy.

Local Elected Women are Looking for Solutions

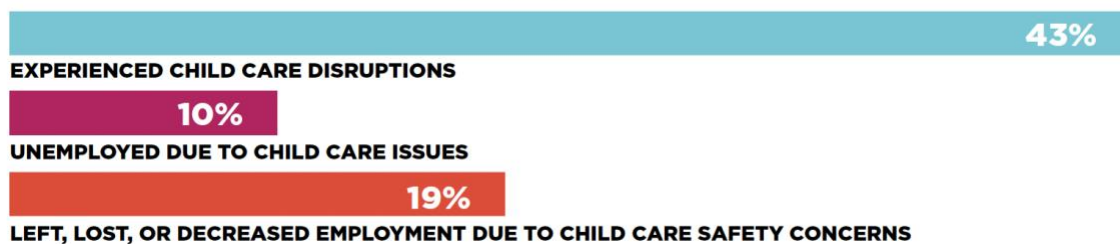
The Women's Foundation operates *Women Run!*, the only nonpartisan program in the state encouraging and training women to run for local and state office. We hear all the time from women who want to serve their communities and are searching for practical ways to support the people and families in their communities. Women are more likely to run for local office than higher office, and they are often the ones closest to the issue of child care. There currently aren't many existing opportunities for local elected officials to make an impact on child care, even though it is an issue that impacts communities and towns directly. SB 221 would give the opportunity for local leaders to consider one solution that may make an impact.

Workforce Issues Due to Child Care Crisis

Local businesses are feeling the impact of women's absence from the workforce. Nationally, women's labor force participation is 1% lower than it was pre-pandemic, representing an estimated one million women missing from the labor force.¹ During the pandemic, mothers with young children arranged reductions in their work hours that

CHILD CARE IMPLICATIONS FOR HOUSEHOLDS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, Weeks 40 - 42, Education Table 1.



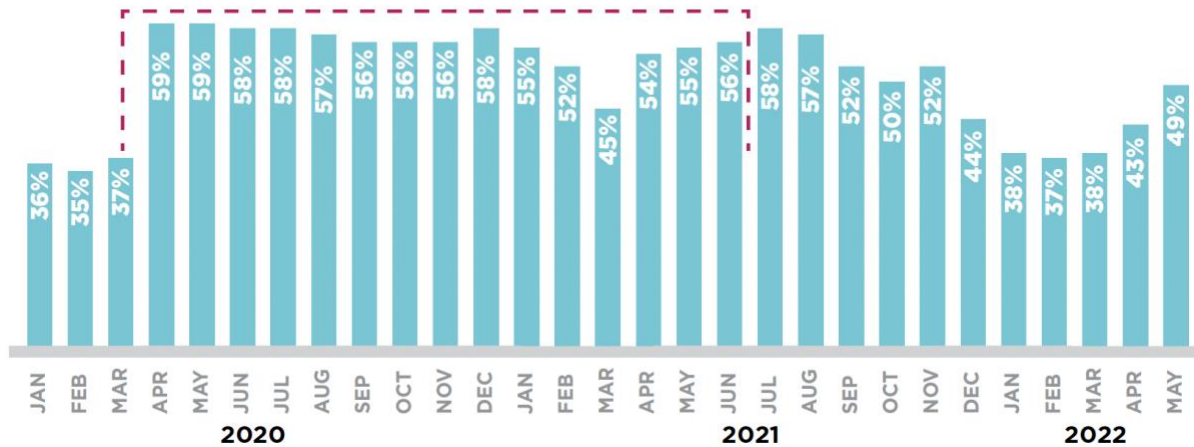
¹ Ferguson, Stephanie, and Isabella Lucy. U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2022, *Data Deep Dive: A Decline of Women in the Workforce*, <https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/data-deep-dive-a-decline-of-women-in-the-workforce>. Accessed 14 Feb. 2023.

are four to five times greater than the reductions arranged by fathers.² And without access to reliable child care, women leave the workforce. Women made up 53% of NH unemployment claims during the pandemic.³ Between April 2020 and December 2021, 15% of Granite State workers who were out of the labor force cited child care as the primary reason for not working.⁴

WOMEN'S UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Unemployment Insurance Data, ETA 203, Characteristics of the Uninsured.

--- STATE OF EMERGENCY IN EFFECT IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

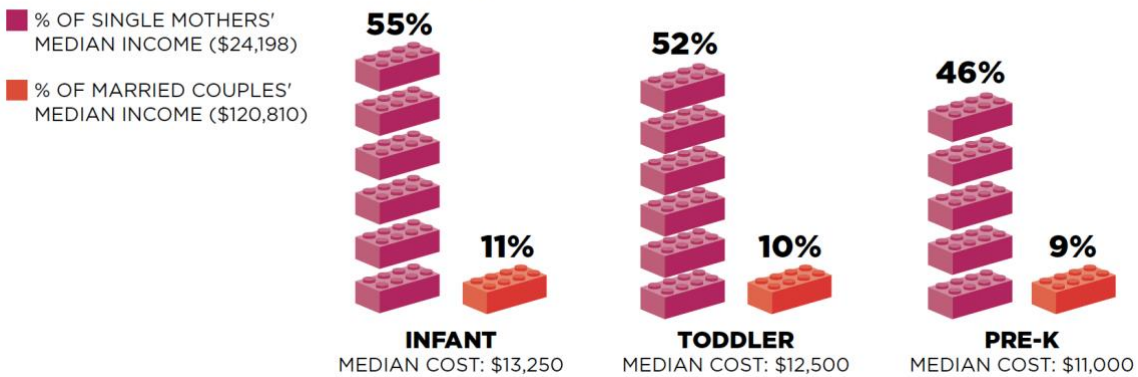


Child Care is Unaffordable and Providers Cannot Lower Prices

Child care is expensive and out of reach for many parents. The annual median cost for an infant in a New Hampshire child care center care is \$13,250, a cost that would consume 11% of the median income of a married couple, and a staggering **55% of a single mother's annual median income**.⁵ Child care providers are barely making ends meet and cannot lower or even stabilize the price of child care without additional support.

CHILD CARE AFFORDABILITY

New Hampshire Connections, 2021 New Hampshire Child Care Market Rate Final Report.
Median income listed below is for single mother/married couple with child under the age of 5 years old.



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>.

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

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

⁵ New Hampshire Connects. (2021). New Hampshire Child Care Market Rate Final Report.

Conclusion

SB 221 provides relief to child care providers, to women who need child care and to local leaders who are looking for opportunities to respond to their residents and economies. SB 221 enables local elected officials, closest to the issue of child care and the needs of their local economies, an opportunity to support a child care solution that's right for their own towns.

Therefore, we respectfully ask for your support of SB 221.