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. During the pandemic, mothers with young children arranged reductions in their work hours that

---

are four to five times greater than the reductions arranged by fathers.\textsuperscript{2} And without access to reliable child care, women leave the workforce. Women made up 53\% of NH unemployment claims during the pandemic.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{4}

\textbf{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 \textbf{55\% of a single mother’s annual median income}.\textsuperscript{5} Child care providers are barely making ends meet and cannot lower or even stabilize the price of child care without additional support.


\textsuperscript{3} BLS Unemployment Insurance Data, ETA 203. Characteristics of the Uninsured.

\textsuperscript{4} U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, Week 1-41.

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.