



new hampshire

WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

To: Chair Birdsell and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee

Re: SB 404, relative to expanding child care professionals' eligibility for the child care scholarship program.

Date: January 3, 2024

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 404 because affordable and accessible child care is essential for a functioning economy and because women are the most impacted by the child care industry – both as the providers and as those who rely on its service. **SB 404 will support the childcare industry, childcare workers, and the families, particularly women, who rely on childcare to return to the workforce.**

Women make the economy work. But they need child care.

Women Left the Workforce Due to Child Care Issues

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.¹ And without access to reliable child care, women cannot return to the workforce or keep the same hours in the workforce.

Child Care is Unaffordable

Child care is expensive and out of reach for many parents. Lower-wage workers, like those providing child care, often cannot afford to pay for child care themselves. On a single income, working is simply not a viable option for many single mothers.

Women are Majority of Child Care Workforce

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.**² SB 404 would benefit working mothers who work in the child care industry, helping both those workers and other families who rely on their work.

Conclusion

Women make the economy work — they are both the backbone of the child care industry and the backbone of the labor force who rely on access to reliable and affordable child care. SB 404 provides solutions to increase and retain the child care workforce and increase childcare availability for many working families. We respectfully ask for your support of SB 404.

Respectfully submitted,
Devan Quinn
Director of Policy, New Hampshire Women's Foundation

¹ 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>.

² Center for Economic and Policy Research Analyzing ACS 2014-2018.