



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
GARY HEBL
46TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

December 11, 2014

Eloise Anderson, Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
201 East Washington Avenue
P.O. Box 8916
Madison, WI 53708-8916

Dear Secretary Anderson:

As state legislators who are committed to quality early education and supporting our state's child care industry, we encourage you to use funding that was allocated for the Wisconsin Shares program in the current biennium, but is not being spent, to increase child care reimbursement rates for child care providers in the Shares program.

According to a unanimous, bipartisan motion passed by the Joint Finance Committee earlier this year, the state had \$22.7 million in unspent child care funds this biennium. After spending \$5.3 million for a recent 2% increase, that leaves at least \$17.4 million available to be spent this biennium. We strongly encourage you to allocate the remainder of these funds where they were intended: supporting early education in Wisconsin.

Both state law and federal guidelines indicate that child care reimbursement rates should be set so they cover at least 75% of available slots. Unfortunately, the state's current reimbursement rates don't even come close. The 2% increase will get rates within 18% of the 75th percentile market rate in each county. This increase has had very little impact on most early education providers.

A major employer in the state that plays an essential role in providing quality early education and workforce development, Wisconsin's early education industry can best be described as being on life support. Because Wisconsin Shares' rates were frozen for seven years and just recently received minimal increases, most centers are struggling to survive.

The model of a five-star center under YoungStar, Wisconsin's quality rating and improvement system, is unsustainable under current funding levels. As one Senator recently noted, "the more stars you have, the better the chance you are going to go broke."

If Wisconsin is truly committed to quality early education, we need to increase reimbursement rates. We look forward to your response to this request.

Sincerely,

GARY HEBL
State Representative
46th Assembly District

JOCASTA ZAMARRIPA
State Representative
8th Assembly District



CHRISTINE SINICKI
State Representative
20th Assembly District



DEBRA KOLSTE
State Representative
44th Assembly District



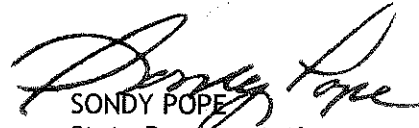
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State Representative
66th Assembly District



TERESE BERCEAU
State Representative
77th Assembly District



JILL BILLINGS
State Representative
95th Assembly District



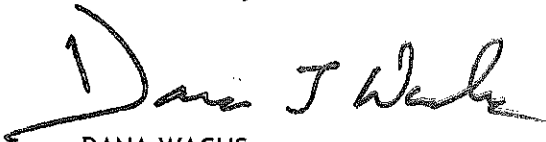
SONDY POPE
State Representative
80th Assembly District



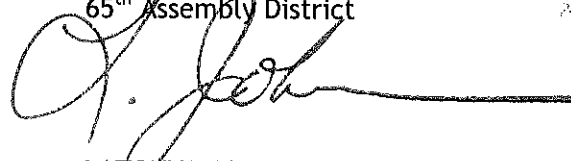
JANIS RINGHAND
State Representative
45th Assembly District



TOD OHNSTAD
State Representative
65th Assembly District



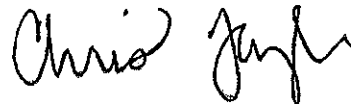
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ANDY JORGENSEN
State Representative
43rd Assembly District

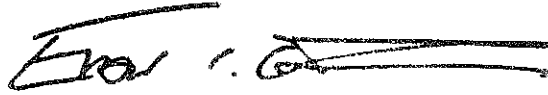


PETER BARCA
State Representative
64th Assembly District

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JOSH ZEPNICK
State Representative
9th Assembly District



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State Representative
18th Assembly District



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Senator
16th Senate District



NIKKI HARRIS DODD
Senator
6th Senate District




CHRIS LARSON
Senator
7th Senate District



JENNIFER SHILLING
Senator
32nd Senate District



LENA TAYLOR
Senator
4th Senate District



JULIE LASSA
Senator
24th Senate District

cc: Governor Scott Walker