



The Honorable Hanseul Kang
State Superintendent
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
810 1st Street NE, Ninth Floor
Washington, DC 20002

IWV Supports Rolling Back the College Degree Requirement for D.C. Childcare Workers

December 8, 2017

Dear Superintendent Kang,

On behalf of Independent Women's Voice, a 501(c)(4) organization for mainstream women, men and families, I am writing this letter in support of rolling back the college degree requirement for childcare workers in Washington, D.C. If enacted, this regulation will not only make it more difficult for childcare workers to get and keep their jobs, it will make the cost of caring for a child in D.C. even more expensive than it already is.

Last year, D.C. passed a new rule requiring that, by the year 2023, all childcare workers hold an associate's degree or higher and that daycare directors hold at least a bachelor's degree. Currently, about half of D.C.'s childcare workers do not meet these credentials which means they must obtain a college degree before 2023 or else they will be out of a job.

The new regulation will be a significant burden on childcare workers, and many simply do not have the resources to go back to school. On average, childcare workers in Washington earn a salary of about \$26,900 per year. Obtaining a degree costs thousands of dollars: It costs about \$7,000 to obtain an associate's degree at a public school and \$40,000 for a bachelor's degree. It's nonsensical and wrong to throw a qualified individual out of work, especially those who have decades of experience working with children, because he or she lacks the resources to cover tuition costs for a degree that has very little relevance to caring for children.

Sadly, the regulation would be particularly harmful to women and minorities. Women account for 96 percent of U.S. childcare workers and Hispanics (20 percent) and African Americans (14 percent) account for a combined 34 percent of childcare workers nationwide.

Furthermore, if implemented, the college degree requirement for D.C. childcare workers will make child care even more costly. D.C families presently pay some of the highest childcare costs in the nation. According to the “Parents and the High Cost of Child Care” annual report, in 2015, full-time daycare for infants amounted to \$22,631 per child each year. The average cost of childcare in D.C. now exceeds the average cost of in-state college tuition.

Worst of all, the new regulation is unlikely to result in higher quality care for children. Studies conducted by the Mercatus Center concluded that regulations intended to enhance daycare quality usually fail because they encourage daycare centers to focus on the wrong criteria, ultimately only succeeding in driving up the price of care.

Independent Women’s Voice strongly urges city officials to roll back this counterproductive regulation and instead focus on ways to actually improve the quality of child care and help children and the workers who care for them succeed.

Respectfully,



Hadley Heath Manning

Director of Policy

Independent Women’s Forum