



June 29, 2023

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz, Chairperson, House Ways and Means
The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues, Chairperson, Senate Ways and Means
The Honorable Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Vice Chairperson, House Ways and Means
The Honorable Cindy F. Friedman, Vice Chairperson, Senate Ways and Means
The Honorable Todd M. Smola, Ranking Member, House Ways and Means
The Honorable Patrick O'Connor, Ranking Member, Senate Ways and Means

Dear Chairperson Michlewitz, Chairperson Rodrigues, Vice Chairperson Ferrante, Vice Chairperson Friedman, Ranking Member Smola, and Ranking Member O'Connor:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Business Coalition for Early Childhood Education, a diverse and growing statewide coalition of employer leaders from [85 companies with more than 300,000 Massachusetts employees and 22 business association partners representing thousands of businesses](#) from all regions and industries, I am writing to thank House and Senate leaders for the historic leadership that both chambers have delivered on behalf of early care and education (ECE) programming that is vital to the success of all children, families, communities, and the Commonwealth's economic competitiveness.

Launched in 2021, our Coalition believes that ECE, especially for children ages 0-5, represents critical economic infrastructure that helps enable Massachusetts to attract and retain the talent necessary to achieve a thriving and more equitable economy. Our belief is well founded. In May of 2022, [groundbreaking Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation research](#) concluded that insufficient childcare costs Massachusetts between \$2.6 billion and \$3 billion each year, impacting families, businesses, and tax revenues. ReadyNation, a national employer group dedicated to promoting the critical connection between childcare and the economy, [recently released research](#) showing that the annual impact on U.S. families, businesses, and taxpayers is \$122 billion – more than double since 2018.

The experience of our Coalition members validates the childcare challenges facing their employees. In a recent survey of our Coalition members, 97% of respondents indicated that a few, some, or many of their employees had raised childcare as a concern. In response, we are launching an Employer-Supported Childcare Community of Practice to help our members and all Massachusetts employers learn more about best and innovative practices to support employee needs, and to share any learnings with our public sector leaders. We believe this effort will help support the positive momentum generated through the numerous collaborative

efforts of our public leaders, allies in the advocacy community, and dedicated ECE professionals. Our Coalition has been grateful, honored, and humbled to participate in many of these efforts as a source of perspective from the Massachusetts employer community since our launch.

With strong and visionary leadership from Governor Maura Healey, Senate President Karen Spilka, House Speaker Ronald Mariano, and the entire House of Representatives and Senate, Massachusetts is poised to build on a historic Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) State Budget with an even more significant and sustainable FY24 State Budget for ECE. Respectfully, we request that the Conference Committee include the following proposals in your FY24 State Budget proposal in order to help deliver a powerful set of ECE supports to the Commonwealth:

- \$475 million for Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Stabilization Grants;
- \$70 million Center-Based Child Care Rate Increase (line item 3000-1042 in House budget);
- \$30 million for Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative (line items 3000-6025 and 1596-2412 in Senate budget);
- \$25 million for early education and care capital improvements (line item 1596-2429 in Senate budget); and,
- \$15 million for grants to early education and care providers for costs associated with personal child care (line item 1596-2430 in Senate budget) \$475 million for Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Stabilization Grants.

Both the House and Senate budget proposals provide significant progress for ECE and toward achieving the goals of the [Final Report of the Legislature's Special Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission](#), which our Coalition was honored to participate in and support. We believe that the inclusion of the above proposals will produce an ECE budget with the greatest potential to support Massachusetts children, families, workers, communities and bolster our overall economic competitiveness.

We appreciate that the FY24 State Budget represents the next important chapter that Massachusetts leaders are authoring in service of ECE, a powerful component of our education, workforce, and economic systems. Please continue to utilize our Coalition as a resource, as we

endeavor to partner with you to create a “world-class” ECE system that will endure as a cornerstone for more successful and equitable communities and economic opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas L. Weber". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Thomas L. Weber
Executive Director
MA Business Coalition for Early Childhood Education