

April 24, 2021

To: Joint Committee on Ways & Means

Re: Child Care Funding and HB 3073

Co-Chairs Betsy Johnson, Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Dan Rayfield, and Members of the House Joint Committee on Ways and Means,

My Name is Maria Gonzalez, I am the eldest daughter of 3 children to immigrant parents from Mexico. In 2005, both of my parents worked my mother in farm labor and my father as a sanitation worker for a crantor. When I was 3 months old my mother had to return to work because my fathers income was not enough to pay for our living expenses and needs. My parents took me to a woman who would take care of me. She told my mother she loved to take care of kids. After about 6 months of my mother working when I was 9-months-old, my father was sent home early from work one day. He arrived at the home of my child care provider and discovered that the place was not clean and I was not being cared for properly. I was sitting on the dirty floor with dirty clothes and with a very dirty dipper. This broke my fathers heart so much that as soon as my mother came home he told her about the conditions he found me in. She broke down crying feeling angry, betrayed and guilty for having placed me in such a horrible situation. She had not been aware of it since by the time she would pick me up I was clean and the place seemed tidy. I never returned to that place and my mother stayed home.

My mom decided she would leave her job to take care of me. They could not afford a child care center and no longer trusted anyone else to care for me. This was a good thing in my eyes but now that I have grown up I see that it was but it also made things difficult for us as a family. We have always struggled financially, we can only depend on one income. As our family grew my parents would often struggle when we had unexpected medical costs for my grandparents who lived in Mexico. My mother has always had to stretch out the food budget making sure to look for the best price for food and supplement it with food from our local food pantry to this day. There are many limitations to the things we can afford so I have learned to not ask for much. My siblings and I have gotten used to this situation. Often my mother and father talk about her going back to work so we can afford additional things in life. But these conversations are always followed by the conclusion of their past horrible experience from when I was a baby.

My parents never wanted to have to go through the same experience as before so my mother has continued to be a stay at home mom. Our family has had to continue to make due with what my father can provide. Often causing them lots of stress and anxiety over how they will make their bill payments each month. I am sure that if given the option for a place in which her three kids could be taken care while she worked and helped out my dad she would choose that option. She would have felt relieved to know her children are in good hands and our family would have had more income to support us. We would have been able to live with a lot less stress and anxiety.

I will be going to college soon and I know I will need their financial support to be able to make it through. My younger brother is 4 and our mother would like to go back so she can help with our families expenses. I ask that you please prioritize childcare funding this legislative session and

support HB 3073 so that my mother can return to the workforce with adequate childcare for my brother. This would help me and my family alot.

Thank you
Maria Gonzalez Romero
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