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Gray
LD 210

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee and Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Erin Leaman-Farley. I am a program director and live in Gray.

I am opposed to the proposed \$15 million annual/\$30 million biennial cuts to the Child Care Wage Supplement Program. These cuts would inevitably lead to massive turnover within my childcare program. As a parent and the director this would be devastating. Our program pays competitively when it comes to ECE however we still lose teachers to other jobs due to compensation. Early education is high paced, stressful and wildly under appreciated. These educators already make the most of each day, and they deeply care for their community. However we all have bills to pay, and when local retail jobs pay more, it's understandable that they move on.

I am opposed to the proposed \$3.6 million annual/\$7.2 million biennial cuts to general funds for Head Start. Head start has been essential for families to access education for their children that they would likely otherwise never get. For these children it is a safe space for them when other spaces may be unpredictable. Head start provides such a wide variety of support to children and is essential for early education and getting children ready for the future.

I am opposed to the proposed \$2.5 million annually/\$5 million biennial cuts and elimination of the Child Care Employment Award. This program has allowed many teachers to access low cost support for their children. I would urge you to reconsider the cut, instead moderate how it is applied. Many ECE programs offer tuition breaks for their employees, consider covering the cost they are paying vs the full tuition amount. Likewise for subsidy and the employment award. If a teacher qualified for subsidy then instead of a double award allocate that money to go to another educator who is currently waitlisted.