

Ashley Talcove
Burnham
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 Ashley Talcove. I am an assistant teacher and live in Burnham.

I am opposed to the proposed \$15 million annual/\$30 million biennial cuts to the Child Care Wage Supplement Program. As an educator and mom of two I rely on the Child Care Wage Supplement to ensure that my children have what they need to thrive. We as educators do not get paid much to begin with and this does help supplement our low wages. This supplement is now a part of my budget it is money that I rely on each month to make sure my lights stay on and my children have clothes and other necessities to thrive.

I am opposed to the proposed \$3.6 million annual/\$7.2 million biennial cuts to general funds for Head Start. I oppose this cut as a teacher and a parent. As a teacher I work with one of the most vulnerable populations and have the privilege of serving them. Through head start we are able to give the, tools and resources to help break down barriers that they wouldn't have access to without head start. We ensure that they get dental clinics, healthy meals throughout the day, adequate outdoor time, we incorporate a curriculum for them so they are at Kindergarten level or higher by the time they start school. As a parent I oppose these cuts because it will dramatically affect my family. We are not rich in fact we qualify for Head start funding. We both work full time jobs and attend school to better our futures but still can not make ends meet in this economy. Without Head start funding our scholarship goes away. We will be forced to pay private pay rates for daycare if they do not close due to this. If we end up paying private pay rates my whole pay check will go to the girls daycare fees. Ultimately resulting in me leaving this profession and keeping the girls home with me. That would mean one less worker in this industry, one less income in my house, and relying on an increase in food stamps just to make sure my family can be fed and exploring other avenues like heating assistance.

I am opposed to the proposed \$2.5 million annually/\$5 million biennial cuts and elimination of the Child Care Employment Award. I oppose this cut due to the fact that I am on the waitlist. I believe that the fact that within 3 months we had a waitlist for child care employees to access help speaks volumes to the kind of program it is. This program is not a luxury it is a necessity. If child care employees can not afford their own childcare they will be forced to leave this profession. Leaving an already short staffed profession even more desperate for help.