

Submitter: Maria Gonzalez Romero
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood
Measure: HB4005

Dear Chair Karin Power and Vice Chairs Lisa Reynolds and Jack Zika:

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 diaper. 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.

Our family has had to continue to make do with what my father can provide, often causing my parents lots of stress and anxiety over how they will make their bill payments each month.

My mother would like to go back to work so she can help with our family's expenses. She would feel so relieved to know her children are in good hands and our family would have more income to support us. We would be able to live with a lot less stress

and anxiety. But in order for that to happen, there has to be enough child care available, and it has to be affordable. Right now, neither of these is true.

I ask that you please prioritize childcare funding this legislative session and support HB 4005 so that my mother can return to the workforce with adequate childcare for my brother. This would help me and my family a lot.

Thank you
Maria Gonzalez Romero
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