

Submitter: Brynna Farley
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Dear legislators,

I have worked in the early childcare industry for over 10 years and I have seen first hand the struggles preschool teachers face to pay for rent, utilities and even important medical expenses because of the low pay we receive. I started working for head start 4 years ago, and while the pay is more then non profits I worked for, it's still a struggle to try and live off the low wage. I had a co worker who was a single mom, that worked another job in the evenings and sometimes over the weekend, to supplement her income while working for head start. I am fortunate for my husband to have a good paying job because without him, I know I would be in the same position as my co worker, which is really scary to think about.

While children are attending head start, we provide at least 2 meals and support children in early literacy, language and social emotional development. We also serve children and families with the highest needs which includes families that earn less than 100 percent of federal poverty level, are currently homeless, in foster care or from families receiving TANF, SSI benefits, or SNAP. We provide a safe place for the kids and the meals they have in head start could very well be the only meals they eat that day. It's not just education we are providing we also help families, with nutrition and health support.

I really do hope you consider an increase in wages as it will help with the high turn over rate head start faces on the day to day basis. Last school year one of our classrooms went through 3 different teachers, it was really hard on the kids and caused an increase in behaviors due the the inconsistency.