



To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means

From: Imagine Black

Re: SB 5701

Date: 03/06/2024

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Chair Holvey, Chair Girad, and members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Danita Harris, I use they/them pronouns, and I am the Deputy Director of Movement Building for Imagine Black, where we envision a world where people of African descent enjoy the rights, resources, and recognition to be a thriving resilient, and connected community. If it has been said once, it has been declared a million times childcare is the work that makes all work possible.

SB 5701 carries significant investments in Early Learning and Care. Without this funding, families presently enrolled in the Employment Related Day Care program could have faced consequences such as steep co-pay increases. Right now, there are over *1,900* families, not individual children but *families*, on a waitlist to receive childcare in order to work or go to school - because childcare is the work that makes all work possible.

Working-class families need your ongoing support; the waitlist clearly indicates that. This investment, coupled with the momentum garnered over the past few years, makes significant headway in addressing the childcare desert that exists in every county in our state.

Thank you for this meaningful investment.

Thank you,

Danita Harris

Deputy Director of Movement Building, Imagine Black