

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on International Relations & Economic Development  
For HB 3771

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Hearing Date: April 18, 2023 8:00 AM

Cody Summerville

Texas Association for the Education of Young Children

Austin, TX

The Texas Association for the Education of Young Children (TXAEYC) is the state's largest membership association for early childhood professionals with nearly 3,000 members across the state.

Working families have far less access to child care today than before the pandemic. As of April 2023, Texas had 27% less child care programs operating than compared to March 2020. And a survey conducted by TXAEYC revealed that 44% of responding child care programs are likely or maybe likely to close in the next year, which will leave working families with even fewer options for child care.

Not only is child care difficult to find, it also very expensive. According to TWC's 2022 Child Care Market Rate Survey, the average cost of infant care was over \$10,000/year. Our state's child care scholarship program is not sufficient to meet the needs of working families. There are approximately 60,000 children on the waiting list for child care scholarships and current eligibility is restricted to low-income families. Middle income families do not currently have any support for the cost of child care. And with the average family of four paying \$16,000/year for child care, middle income families are facing a significant hardship. HB 3771 provides much needed relief from high child care cost currently incurred by middle income families.

Texas currently does not contribute any additional funding toward child care beyond our federally required state match in order to draw down funds through the Child Care and Development Block Grant. The lack of state investment and limited reach of our current child care scholarship program is leaving many working families in a tough place as they juggle the cost of child care on their own. HB 3771 provides a model that makes Texas more friendly for working families and businesses alike.

The financing of high-quality child care requires innovative solutions and strategic partnerships to ensure young children and families have access to affordable, high-quality child care. All industries rely on working parents of young children. In order for those working parents to show up to work and be productive, they must have access to high-quality child care. Sharing the cost of child care between employers, families, and the State is a smart strategy for supporting the workforce of today and the workforce of tomorrow.

Our current child care scholarship program is built on a flawed market rate methodology which does not recognize the true cost of providing quality child care, leaving early childhood educators in Texas earning \$12/hour on average. HB 3771 rightfully does not calculate the state match using methods related to the child care scholarship program. It's tiered state match approach tied to an employer's contribution level will maximize funding to reduce child care cost incurred by families.

TXAEYC supports HB 3771 as a measure for supporting our young children, working families, child care programs, and the entire Texas economy.