

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

February 16, 2021

DISSENTING VIEWS ON SUBTITLE I. BUDGET RECONCILIATION LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO CHILD CARE FOR WORKERS

Committee Republicans oppose Subtitle I. In the past, Republicans and Democrats have worked together to increase access to affordable, high quality child care. In the last five years, Congress has doubled funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). Last March, Congress took bipartisan action in the CARES Act to provide \$3.5 billion in dedicated resources to address child care. Most recently, the bipartisan \$900 billion COVID relief package passed in December included another \$10 billion in emergency funding to help child care programs and providers safely reopen. All told, in 2020, states received nearly \$22 billion in federal funding for child care. In Subtitle I, the Majority proposes to increase mandatory funding for the child care entitlement to states by another \$600 million permanently.

Meanwhile, the Majority at the Committee on Education and Labor simultaneously marked up a COVID-19 reconciliation package that would increase funding for child care by another \$39 billion.³³ There does not appear to be a justification for this additional mandatory increase – aside from a false pretense the Majority clung to during the mark-up that these particular dollars would be for families and the other resources for child care providers. This is not true. Resources from CCDBG, of which Committee on Education and Labor has primary jurisdiction, and funds from the child care entitlement to states, of which this Committee has jurisdiction – are combined and operated as a single block grant to states as the Child care and Development Fund. Uses and purposes of funds do not differ – they may go to families or child care providers at the state’s discretion. At no point in the mark-up did the Majority speak to the level of funding being considered by the Committee on Education and Labor. Yet, would scold Republicans for opposing the funding considered in Subtitle I.

Committee Republicans offered two amendments to ensure any additional funding for child care is provided with reasonable assurances from states that they would re-open schools and that they would provide a plan for distributing funds to local providers in a timely manner. The first amendment would have made waiving the match for additional child care dollars in FY 2021 and 2022, conditional on states having a plan to safely re-open schools with in-person learning. The re-opening of child care and schools goes hand-in-hand. Schools can return to in-person learning and operate safely with some basic precautions. Just last week, CDC Director Rochelle

³³ Section 2203 provides \$14.99 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and an additional \$23.98 billion for child care stabilization in accordance with requirements of CCDBG:

<https://edlabor.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2021-02-08%20FY21%20Budget%20Reconciliation%20Section%20by%20Section.pdf>

Walensky said that “vaccination of teachers is not a prerequisite for safe reopening of schools” and that it is clear “that there is increasing data to suggest that schools can safely reopen.”³⁴

By re-opening schools, we can start to combat many of the issue’s children face with social isolation, loneliness, and anxiety. Access to education is fundamental in allowing children to achieve the American Dream. This amendment would have leveraged additional child care dollars to incentivize states to re-open schools. Democrats falsely claimed the amendment would condition new funding on re-opening schools, in fact the amendment would solely apply as a condition of waiving the state match requirement. The second amendment would have required states to submit a plan within 30 days of enactment on how they will make any supplemental child care money available to local providers in a timely manner, again as a condition of waiving the state match requirement. The amendment would have simply asked states to formally commit to a plan and a timetable to ensure there is an urgency to getting additional money down to local communities. Both amendments were unanimously rejected by Committee Democrats.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "KEVIN BRADY". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "K" and "B".

Kevin Brady
Republican Leader
Committee on Ways and Means

³⁴ “CDC Director says it’s not necessary for teachers to be vaccinated in order to reopen schools,” February 3, 2021, ABC News.