



IWV Supports the Respect Parents' Childcare Choices Act

July 25, 2024

Dear Senators,

Independent Women's Voice (IWV), the leading national women's organization dedicated to advancing policies that expand people's freedom, opportunities, and well-being, is committed to policies creating an environment in which parents have a variety of quality, flexible, accessible childcare options that meet their unique needs.

On behalf of IWV, I urge you to support the Respect Parents' Childcare Choices Act, introduced by Senator Marco Rubio. If enacted, this legislation would amend the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 1990 so that the program provides parents with more diverse childcare options to allow them to make the decision that they feel is best for their families.

Right now, children must meet certain criteria in order to be eligible for support under the CCDBG Act, including having parents working outside of the home. Yet many households choose to keep or would rather keep their child home in a family-care setting rather than a formal, paid childcare facility.

Under the Respect Parents' Childcare Choices Act, married parents that opt for one parent to stay home and care for the child would qualify for CCDBG vouchers, so long as their family unit has a combined total of 40 hours of work per week. Importantly, this would provide direct support to these households, instead of requiring them to use the voucher to pay a third-party childcare provider.

This was one of the many recommendations made by IWV's sister organization, Independent Women's Forum, in the "**Working for Women Report**, a modern agenda to help women strive and thrive." Rather than the government propping up select childcare facilities, policymakers ought to focus on reducing financial burdens on parents. In doing so, policies should not make financial support conditional on childcare arrangements. Incentivizing the use of paid formal childcare centers isn't fair to all the families with loved ones who provide loving care for children in their lives for free while forgoing paid employment.

Additionally, this bill would exempt relative caregivers and in-home childcare providers from unnecessary regulations. We all want our children happy and safe, but requirements that are not directly related to safety and true quality that simply increase costs for providers and families and keep potential providers out of the market should be rescinded.

Now more than ever, households need access to affordable, high-quality childcare options, and the Respect Parents' Childcare Choices Act would help to achieve this. Moreover, this bill recognizes that child care is a very personal choice and families have different preferences for care. We applaud Senator Rubio for his leadership on this issue and urge all senators to join him and work toward the bill's swift passage.

Respectfully,

Carrie Lukas

Vice President

Independent Women's Voice