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NATHAN FLETCHER
CHAIR
SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA ITEM

DATE: October 11, 2022

15

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

SAN DIEGO COUNTY CHILDCARE BOARD CONFERENCE (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

Childcare has become an issue of regional significance, and it is imperative that the San Diego County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) take steps to explore the problem in greater depth, along with generating potential solutions.

The Board and County have taken a greater role in the childcare sector, including efforts led by the First 5 Commission, securing \$10 million for Frontline Worker Childcare Vouchers during the COVID-19 pandemic, securing \$1 million to support YMCA Summer Camp operations and scholarships so children from low-income homes would have a safe place to be while their parents went back to work, and the recent allocation of \$12 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds toward childcare.

The Board Conference convened at this meeting will present the Board with an overview of childcare related challenges in the region, including affordability and availability of childcare spaces, and generating potential solutions.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHAIR NATHAN FLETCHER

1. Receive information presented in the San Diego County Childcare Board Conference.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to review the proposed solutions as directed by the Board and, within eight months, report back with recommendations regarding the County's participation in those proposed solutions.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

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Childcare options are unaffordable to many San Diegans, and working families are struggling to make ends meet. The annual cost of care for one infant in a licensed childcare center in San Diego costs over \$19,000.¹ Further, childcare workers are underpaid; the median hourly wage in California for these employees is \$12.29 per hour. One in four childcare workers in California lives in poverty. Women are disproportionately affected, and particularly women of color. Today's action to convene the Childcare Board Conference will help the Board of Supervisors develop solutions around childcare and promote equity for parents and providers, while supporting improved outcomes for our children.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Convening the Childcare Board Conference supports the County's Sustainability Goals by exploring the need to provide just and equitable access to quality and affordable childcare.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with these recommendations. There may be future fiscal impacts based on recommendations from today's action. Any such recommendations would return back for consideration and approval by the Board. Upon return by staff, funding for future costs will need to be identified by the department and will proceed once identified. At this time, there will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

The annual national cost of lost earnings, productivity, and revenue due to the childcare crisis is \$57 billion.² The average price of childcare for two young children in the San Diego region consumes 40 percent of the budget for a typical family of four. Creating more opportunities in the childcare sector can help businesses and families be successful and create the best outcomes for our children.

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

Childcare has become a defining issue for San Diego families. Nearly 190,000 children in San Diego County under 12 have no stay-at-home parent and no available childcare spot.³ If a family is lucky enough to secure a childcare spot, they may have trouble paying for it. The average price of childcare for two young children in the San Diego region consumes 40 percent of the budget for a typical family of four.⁴

¹ <https://workforce.sdfoundation.org/>

² childcare.workforce.org

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

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The lack of childcare spaces and unaffordability has cascading impacts throughout our local economy. Businesses cannot retain their workers, particularly their female employees, because women are dropping out of the workforce to take care of their children. San Diego has the second lowest female participation in the labor force among major American cities.⁵

Childcare providers and employees are also struggling. The median hourly wage for childcare workers in California is \$12.29/hour. One of four childcare workers in California live in poverty, and due to the demanding nature of the job and low pay, these positions have high turnover.⁶ Childcare providers are getting squeezed. There is not enough funding for them to stay above water.

San Diego County has become more and more engaged in the childcare space. This includes the recent efforts by our Board of Supervisors to prioritize \$12 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds toward childcare. Additionally, our First 5 Commission has taken on an important role in participating in convenings and other roles in the childcare space.

Childcare has become an issue of regional significance, and it is imperative that the San Diego County Board of Supervisors host a board conference to explore the problem in greater depth, along with generating potential solutions.

This Board Conference is organized in collaboration with the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council and San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce. Presenters will include:

- Kelly Jenkins-Pultz, U.S. Department of Labor
- Pamela Payton, San Diego Foundation
- Stefanie Benvenuto, San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Johanna Hester, United Domestic Workers
- Liz Ramirez, Chicano Federation
- Lilia Vergara, Dr. Bronner's
- Erin Hogeboom, San Diego for Every Child

These national and local experts will review the problems associated with childcare from diverse perspectives, and then provide the Board with proposed solutions on how best to ensure our children and families are healthy and thriving.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's action holding the Childcare Board Conference advances the Equity and Community Initiatives in the 2022-2027 County of San Diego Strategic Plan by bringing together critical partners and thought leaders in the childcare space to develop comprehensive solutions that San Diego County can implement to advance the childcare sector in support of healthy, thriving families.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan Fletcher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

CHAIR NATHAN FLETCHER
Supervisor, Fourth District

ATTACHMENT(S)
N/A