



*State of North Carolina  
Office of the Governor*

*Roy Cooper  
Governor*

February 27, 2023

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Raleigh, N. C. 27699-0301*

The Hon. Ted Budd  
United States Senate  
B-85 Russell Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20510

The Hon. Thom Tillis  
United States Senate  
113 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20510

The Hon. Don Davis  
U. S. House of Representatives  
1123 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. Deborah Ross  
U. S. House of Representatives  
1221 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. Gregory Murphy  
U. S. House of Representatives  
407 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. Valerie Foushee  
U. S. House of Representatives  
1716 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. Virginia Foxx  
U. S. House of Representatives  
2462 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. Kathy Manning  
U. S. House of Representatives  
307 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. David Rouzer  
U. S. House of Representatives  
2333 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. Richard Hudson  
U. S. House of Representatives  
2112 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. Dan Bishop  
U. S. House of Representatives  
2459 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. Patrick McHenry  
U. S. House of Representatives  
2134 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. Chuck Edwards  
U. S. House of Representatives  
1505 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. Alma Adams  
U. S. House of Representatives  
2436 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. Wiley Nickel  
U. S. House of Representatives  
1133 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

The Hon. Jeff Jackson  
U. S. House of Representatives  
1318 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear North Carolina Congressional Leaders:

North Carolina needs increased recurring federal investment in child care to keep our children learning and our economy growing. Thank you for the critical one-time funding during the pandemic, but as it ends, it's important to know that the need is urgent.

Quality child care matters to every North Carolinian, giving young children a strong foundation to grow and thrive. Research shows that investment in high-quality early learning programs has a positive long-term effect on children's education and well-being. Eighty-five percent of brain development occurs by age three and children's earliest experiences are critical for healthy development and future learning.

When I talk with North Carolina business leaders and employers, they tell me that child care is essential to North Carolina's economy and the shortage of child care options is hurting all of us. Without access to affordable, safe, high-quality child care, parents cannot get back to work or stay in the workforce, which means that employers will continue to struggle to hire the people they need. The child care crisis is already impacting our entire economy. Almost half of all working parents say the number of hours they can work has been compromised by lack of child care options, and one-fifth say they have had to leave the labor market entirely. A recent study estimated that the child care crisis costs North Carolina \$3.5 billion each year in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue.

Our under-resourced child care system is strained to its breaking point. Many child care centers are struggling to keep their doors open, and many child care teachers have left the field. Child care employment in North Carolina was trending upward until the pandemic reversed that trend. As of 2021, North Carolina had 3,120 *fewer* child care workers than we would have if pre-pandemic employment trends had continued. Our smart American Rescue Plan investments in child care have helped North Carolina's child care workforce fare better than most, helping more than 4,000 child care programs stay open and boosting pay for more than 41,000 teachers and staff. But that funding is about to run out.

That's why the NC Chamber has formed a Coalition on Child Care to advance the child care funding sources and innovations needed to expand access to child care in our state. It's also why the NC Department of Commerce published a report in December highlighting the shortfall in North Carolina child care workers—aptly called “the workforce behind the workforce.” But without continued federal investment, the child care crisis will only worsen.

North Carolina needs recurring federal investment in quality child care right now to keep our children learning and our economy growing. We need child care programs that can afford to stay open. We also need teachers who can afford to stay in the classroom. I urge you to seek all available opportunities to make these recurring investments in our state, our economy, and our future.

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If you have questions, please contact Susan Gale Perry, Chief Deputy Secretary for Opportunity and Well-Being, NC Department of Health and Human Services, at (919) 855-4800 or [susan.gale.perry@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:susan.gale.perry@dhhs.nc.gov).

With kind regards, I am

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "R" and a cursive "oy".

Roy Cooper

RAC/sm/je